Book No.
B M178r

Accession
462185

Form 3431 30M 4-37

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00364 5422

DATE DUE

DEMCO 38-297

F 343

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/arrowofglenlyon0000aawr

THE ARROW OF GLENLYON

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

IDEALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY

SIR ROBERT PEEL
(MAKERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SERIES)

A SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN

The Arrow of Glenlyon

THE LIFE OF ALASDAIR MACGREGOR OF GLENSTRAE, A HIGHLAND GENTLEMAN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

BY

A. A. W. RAMSAY, M.A., PHIL.D.

S. F. Public Library

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

First Edition 1930

B
M178r
462185

3 1223 00364 5422

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	FOREWORD	ix
	GLOSSARY	xi
I.	THE WAY OF THE WILD ASH	1
II.	THE BROKEN MEN	24
III.	DRUMMOND-ERNOCH	45
IV.	THE CONSPIRATORS	73
V.	THE GENERAL BAND	103
VI.	THE RAID OF GLENFRUIN	131
VII.	THE EARL OF ARGYLL'S HUNTING	161
VIII.	THE NAMELESS CLAN	187
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	193
	INDEX	195

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACE PAGE
Map	1
Glen Strae	28
The MacGregor Country: looking down Strathfillan to Ben More	28
Inveraray Castle and Dunniquaich . .	84
Stronmelochan, Glenstrae. Ben Lui in the distance	84
On "the 32 merkland west the Water of Erochty"	154
Loch Lomond	154
Waterfall in Glen Falloch	166
Loch Fyne, looking towards Ardkinlas . .	166

FOREWORD

In 1600 the Scottish Parliament adopted the new style of dating, by which the year commenced on 1st January, instead of March. In this book the new style has been used alike for dates before and after 1600, in order to avoid confusion.

The spelling of contemporary documents has been modernised throughout, but the language and form of words have been left unaltered.

I have to thank Mr Lewis Spence for kindly allowing me to quote two verses from his poem "Embro, Embro"; Mr Bruce Dickins for help with the translation of some Old Scots phrases, and Professor John Fraser for correcting quotations made from translations of Gaelic poetry, and the spelling of Gaelic words.

GLOSSARY

Akes (probably), axe—"with mony roustie akes," with many a rusty axe.
als, as.
alsua, also.
attour, moreover.

Bestial, cattle, live-stock.
boastit, threatened.
bodin in feir of weir, prepared for a warlike expedition.
bot, but, without.
boutgaits, deceitful courses.
browst, a brewing.
bruit, rumour.

Calp, due paid to the chief on succession.
clout, a blow.
coronach, wailing for the dead.

Diet, fixed day.

Envy, hate.

Faltour, criminal.
(in) **feyell**, land granted by feudal tenure.
file, to dirty.
fletcher, arrow-maker.

Gar, make.
gif, gin, if.

glaiks (they got the glaiks), they were cheated.
gowd, gold.
graithed, accoutred.
greet, weep.
grettumly, greatly.

Harist, harvest.
hership, plunder.

Inland men, landowners.

Kye, cows.

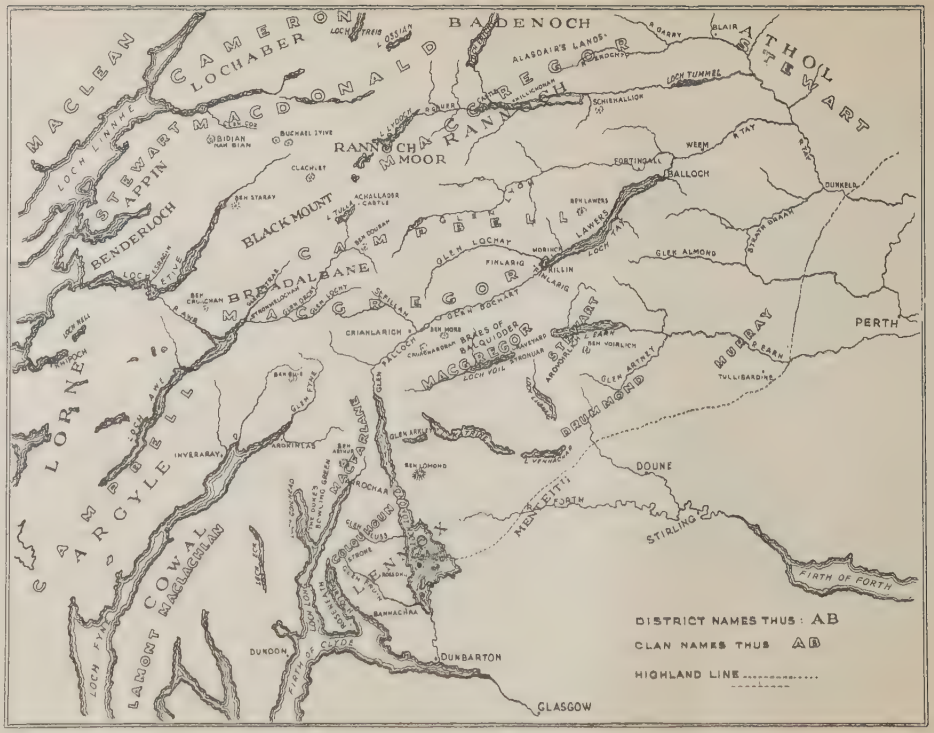
Lifted, carried off.
limmer, scoundrel.
lovites, beloved ones.
lown, tranquil.

Merk, an old Scots coin, value about 1s. 1½d.
mirk, dark.
moyan, means. I made my moyan—I took steps.

Nor, than.

Pledge, hostage.
puir, poor.

Reif, robbery.
reset (1) harbour. (2) receive stolen goods.



Central Scotland to illustrate the text

CHAPTER I

THE WAY OF THE WILD ASH

To whom shall I make my complaint,
And no Clanranald in Moidart?

I

GLENORCHY is one of the most melancholy glens of the Western Highlands. Three great hills preside over its upper reaches: Ben Odhar, Ben-a-Chaisteil, and Ben Dourain, which here shows a formidable profile, incredibly steep and sheer. Allt Coire Challain, sometimes a roaring torrent but more often a trickle of water in a desolation of naked stones, comes down to join the Orchy. But when the river bends southward, the great peaks retire, and it runs mile after mile between low featureless hillsides, freckled with boulders and as often as not streaming with rain.

The lower end of the glen reaches the green links at the head of Loch Awe, a secret sheltered place, shut in on every side by mountains, only open at the head-waters of the great loch, where the sandy shores gleam red and purple, and Kilchurn Castle stands brooding above them. Here, in a short ten

miles, the very air is changed; no longer bitter and brilliant with the winds from the Black Mount, but warm and lown and sleepy. Three glens meet here, Glenorchy the midmost. On the east the road climbs the high pass to Breadalbane and the Lowlands. On the west a deep and narrow cleft runs up into the heart of the wild hills. The seven peaks of Cruachan hang above it and the crags of Ben Eunaich, and, shutting away the afternoon sunlight, make Glenstrae a place of deep green shadows.

The glens are empty now. A rough track leads up the Strae water to some shepherd or keeper's lonely cottage. The houses of the old inhabitants have sunk in ruin till their very stones are lost in the heather. The old church in Dysart of Glenorchy, where twelve MacGregor chieftains lay in their tombs of sculptured stone, was pulled down long ago by improving heritors. Glenorchy is forsaken of its lords, and even proud Kilchurn—"shade of departed power"—stands roofless and forlorn.

You will find the name of Stronmelochan on the map still, but nothing is left of the old house. It stood at the foot of Glenstrae, where the Orchy winds through meadows of tall grass on its way to Loch Awe, with pebble beaches gleaming white, and deep brown pools as clear as glass. It was the home of the MacGregors of Glenstrae, once the chiefs of a powerful

clan and lords of all the country round, later stripped of all their possessions, outlawed and hunted like the wolf among their own hills.

II

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Highlands of Scotland were in a state of almost continuous disorder. During this period Scotland passed through six long royal minorities, when the government was enfeebled and the law relaxed. At the best of times, the central government had little authority in the Highlands; geographical conditions made it impossible to enforce the law there, and the difference of language made Lowland influences slow to penetrate. At intervals some strenuous young king would make an armed progress through the north or the west, would destroy a few castles, clap a few turbulent chieftains into gaol, and take pledges for good behaviour from the rest; but the effects of these incursions were only temporary, and vanished when the king of the day met his apparently inevitable fate, and the crown devolved once more upon a baby. At such times the Lowlands would get out of hand, and the condition of the Highlands became something like anarchy.

With no law to which they might appeal, every man's hand must keep his head, and

those who were oppressed had no resource but to defend themselves by fighting. Probably during those two hundred years the state of the country grew actually worse, not better, and the Highlander of the sixteenth century was more of a barbarian, more isolated from civil influences, than his ancestor of the fourteenth.

Much has been written, then and since, of the savagery of the untamed Highlands ; but if we take the peculiar geographical and political conditions into account, their record compares not unfavourably with that of many contemporary countries, which claimed to be more civilised. The Guises planning the Massacre of St Bartholomew ; Philip II. signing the warrant that condemned the entire population of the Netherlands to death ; Lord Gray de Wilton taming Ireland with his "iron flail" ; the German barons putting down the Peasants' Revolt—all these could give points to the most bloody-minded Highland chief that ever trod the heather.

What most fatally hindered peace and progress in the Highlands was not the ferocity of the people, but their treachery.

Among their neighbours across the Border the Scots in general had a bad reputation in this respect :

> Scots never were true, nor never will be,
> To lord nor lady nor fair England,

says an old ballad. But the southern Scots thought themselves very much superior to their brethren in the north, "Ane Hielandman's promise" was a byword in the Lowlands. The breaking of solemn engagements, the disregard of safe-conducts, the violation of every principle of generosity and faith—these are the commonplaces of Highland history: in proof one need only instance such episodes as the deliberate, callous double-dealing, lasting from one generation to another, which made MacKenzie of Kintail master of the Lewis; the cold-blooded murder of the MacLeods of Raasay in their own kinsman's house; the long feud between the MacLeans of Mull and the MacDonalds of the Isles. There were, of course, honest men in the Highlands as elsewhere; but the danger of habitual treachery is that where it is practised honesty becomes mere fool-hardiness. History is full of instances where honest men put faith in traitors, and the result was their own ruin, and often disaster to the cause of civilisation. So it happened in 1841, when Sir William MacNachtan put faith in Akbar Khan, and brought about his own death and the annihilation of the British Army in Afghanistan; so it happened in 1914, when Europe put faith in the pledges of Germany.

Mutual faith is a necessary condition of society; the law which enforces the keeping

of a contract comes later. The validity of the plighted word, the confidence of one man in another, must come first. Where this is lacking, there can be no security and no peace; and so it was in the Highlands. There covenants were but made to be broken, and there could be no safe peace until one side had ruined or exterminated the other.

Yet it is impossible for men to live without some sort of mutual trust, some guarantee of safety; and in the Highlands this was supplied by the clan system.

The Highlander, though lawless and treacherous, was for the most part loyal to his chief and his clan. He might be impudent and disobedient and backward in paying his dues; but he fought for his chief and died for him and fled to him for help in time of trouble. The chief, on his side, however selfish and unscrupulous he was, always retained some sense of responsibility towards his clansmen. He might bully and ill-treat them and expect them to fling away their lives in his service, but he protected them against outsiders and took the blame of their misdeeds on his shoulders. The bond between them was real and close, a survival of the old tribal feeling. It rarely degenerated into mere tyranny, for it was too democratic in its nature. The chief was not the master, but merely the head and

representative of the kindred. He could be, and occasionally was, deposed. A discontented clansman could repudiate his chief, and go with his *calp* to some other lord.[1] A Highlander without his chief found himself lost and unprotected: "To whom shall I make my complaint," asked one of them, "and no Clanranald in Moidart?"

How real was the value of this protection may be seen by the fate of that clan which had no great chief of its own to protect it. The great Clan Gregor, whose dominions once spread over a large part of the Central Highlands, lost their power and their lands, lost their very name, and were pursued almost to extinction with an unparalleled vindictiveness. The story has touched the imagination of poet and novelist, from Scott and Wordsworth downwards. The reason often given for their proscription is that, being situated near the Lowland border, the misdeeds of the MacGregors attracted more attention than did those of the northern clans. But, as a matter of fact, the Clan Gregor were no nearer the Lowlands than several other clans with a record as bad as theirs. The real reason of their misfortunes was that they had no great landlord

[1] The *calp* was the chief's right to take the best beast from stable or byre on the death of the clansman, and whoever granted this right to any man *ipso facto* acknowledged him as chief.

for their chief, who was able to make himself responsible for them to the central government, or to protect them from encroaching neighbours.

III

Before the Scottish War of Independence the MacGregors seem to have owned a great part of Perthshire. Glenorchy, Glendochart, and Glenlyon were known as "MacGregor's glens." Another branch of the clan was settled in Balquidder. They traced their descent to Kenneth MacAlpine, King of the Picts and Scots, and had assumed the motto "Royal's my race." Later, in the days of their persecution, they changed it to "E'en do and spare nocht." They boasted of their gentility, sharing with another clan a bragging proverb, "There never was a MacGregor who was a churl, or a MacNab who was a hussy."

The Highlanders held their land by ancient allodial titles, older than law. It belonged to the clan as a whole, and the chief held it as their representative. But as Lowland law and feudal theories gradually trickled through from the south, the chiefs began to surrender their lands to the king, receiving them back as his lieges, and so confirming their possession by royal charter. The change was an advantage to the chief, for it made him sole owner of the land, but for his obligations to the crown,

whereas before he had been, in theory at least, only the steward of it in the interests of the clan.

There were, however, many who neglected to obtain this confirmation of their rights. In England, when Edward I. sent about his clerks to ask of the barons, "By what warrant do you hold this land?" Earl Bigod flung the rusty sword, which his ancestor had worn at Hastings, on the table, and said, "By this." There were many Highland lairds who were of the old Earl's opinion, and laughed at royal charters.

Apparently "Lord MacGregor," as he was called out of courtesy, neglected to secure this safeguard. In the fourteenth century his possessions began to melt away. He took the wrong side in the war for national liberty. He followed John of Lorne and fought for the English, and did not have the wit to turn his coat in time to win a pardon.

At this time a certain poor knight lived in the island castle of Inchconnel in Loch Awe. His name was Sir Colin Campbell, and from him the Duke of Argyll to-day takes his Gaelic title, MacCailein More — the Son of Great Colin. He had a son named Neil, whom he sent to school in the Lowlands. One of the boy's schoolmates was William Wallace, and when Wallace raised the people of Scotland

against the English, the two Campbells, father and son, stood by him loyally; and after his death they followed the Bruce. They were among the few Scottish nobles who held to the national cause throughout the struggle.

When Bruce won the crown, he remembered the past, and a great part of the territory round the head of Loch Awe, which had once been MacGregor's, was forfeited and conferred on that staunch partisan and sturdy fighter, Sir Neil Campbell.

During the next two hundred years the Clan Gregor went steadily from bad to worse. They had a singular instinct for the losing cause, and in every civil war or disorder that shook their unlucky country, they unfailingly chose the wrong side and suffered for it. The details of the process are not clear, but the fact is certain that by the end of the fifteenth century the MacGregors no longer possessed a legal title to one single rood of land, and found themselves, alone of the Highland clans, with no great tenant-in-chief of the crown to be their leader:

> Glenorchy's proud mansion, Kilchurn and her towers,
> Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours—
> We're landless, landless, landless, Gregarach,
> Landless, landless, landless!

It was a cruel position at a time when the whole social organisation of the country was

based upon the holding of land. There was no place left for the forfeited clan in Scotland, and emigration on a large scale was, of course, at that time impossible.

The fate of the dispossessed clansmen varied from district to district. In some parts the interloper showed himself friendly and conciliatory, and was content with the nominal superiority, allowing them to go on living on the lands they had held before as his "kindly tenants." This expressive term means that they held at the freewill of their landlord, without any other security than his good disposition towards them. Here they settled down quietly enough.

In other cases, however, where the landlord attempted to turn them out, or where the MacGregor tenant was some gentleman of pride and spirit who would not submit, it came to fighting. They fought fiercely enough in defence of their lands. Sometimes the landlord was too weak to drive them out, and they maintained possession by the strong hand. But if they were once evicted from their holdings, there was nowhere else for them to go. They had then no resource but to live by robbery and plunder.

Just north of "MacGregor's glens" lay the wildest country in Scotland: Rannoch. The western part, Rannoch Moor, was a vast peat

moss, quaking and in places seemingly bottomless,[1] scattered over with little evil black-eyed tarns, impassable in winter or wet weather. To the east was a region of rock and heather, holding in its heart one great lake, Loch Rannoch. A hundred brown streams rush down to empty themselves there; Gauer Water brings the drainings of Rannoch Moor; and the loch is fed, too, by springs in its hidden depths, which before rain show like black stripes on the surface, and keep it from freezing in the coldest winter. At one end is a little islet. Schiehallion's great cone presides over the other.

A pass through the hills led south to Glenlyon. To the north was the forest of Badenoch—a place as waste as the sea, when you look at it from far off; gloomy hills like waves, snaky black ridge on ridge, bald brows, great hunched shoulders, rising in endless vistas, with black lochs hidden among their roots; the ancient haunt of malicious Pictish fairies, where the Calliach Bheur—the Old Wife of Ben-a-vrek — was still reported to come down from her freckled peak at night to share the fire and food of venturesome hunters.

[1] When the West Highland Railway was carried over Rannoch Moor the engineers failed to find bottom, and the road was eventually floated over on bundles of heather.

Rannoch was a sort of No-Man's-Land, never settled or possessed by one clan or one landlord. A more defensible place could not be. It was the refuge of the "broken men" from every quarter. Here the dispossessed MacGregors found shelter; they fortified the island in Loch Rannoch, and from this stronghold defied their foes.

IV

As the fortunes of the MacGregors fell, those of the Campbells of Loch Awe had steadily risen. Their fixed loyalty to the State, and their services in keeping order in the west, procured them many favours. During the fifteenth century the greater part of Lorn and Real Argyll passed into their hands. For their services to James I. they were rewarded with the grant of the peninsula of Roseneath from Albany's forfeited estates; and that brought them very near the Lowlands. MacCailein More was made Lord of Loch Awe, and then Earl of Argyll. In Gaelic they called him *Iarla Oirthir Gaedhel*, Earl of the sea-coasts of the Gael. A little later he was made hereditary Justiciar-General of Scotland. The royal blood ran in his veins—he was descended from Bruce's sister, as the Stewart was from Bruce's daughter. He was like a little king in the west, and contemporary documents talk of

"his country" and "his subjects" as if he had been king indeed.

Meanwhile branches of the clan extended themselves on all sides. They were established in Breadalbane and Cowal. The heiress of the Lamonts of Calder was carried off by force and married to a Campbell. Of this incident a characteristic story was told. Someone remarked that it would be a pity if the little girl died before she was old enough to be married, as in that case her lands would revert to her father's kin. "Muriel Lamont will no' die, while there's a red-haired lassie on the banks o' Loch Awe," replied her self-constituted guardian.

One by one the neighbouring clans went down before these upstarts. It was not the old story of the cunning man of peace overcoming by his arts the simple, headstrong warrior. The Campbells were no peace-lovers; they were a godless crew—

> Perjured, bloody, murderous, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust.

But they had the secret of success. In war or in peace, by marriage, by purchase, by treachery, by diplomacy, by force of arms, they steadily accumulated wealth, power and place; and above all, with a savage intensity that dignifies the passion above the name of greed, they gripped land and more land.

So they went their way—the way of the wild ash, as the Highland proverb says: for the ash grows fast and fair, but kills all living things in its shadow.

It may easily be guessed that the Campbells were not popular. They and their neighbours, in fact, "'greed like tykes and swine." They had no friends. In every district where they appeared, they carried their feud with the original owners, whom they had dispossessed or oppressed.

It was a Campbell, a cadet of the house of Argyll, who held the lands of Glenorchy, once the patrimony of the MacGregors. The first laird, Sir Colin, was a Crusader and Knight of St John. He built himself a new castle at Kilchurn, and founded the family from which the Earls of Breadalbane are descended. The lairds of Glenorchy had all the characteristics of their clan. There is such a steady persistence of the same type, from one generation to another, that reading their history one has a strange feeling that it is the story of one and the same man. They held fast to the counsel given them by the chronicler of their house, "Conques and keep things conquest."[1]

The first Sir Colin acquired, by doubtful means, the lands of Lawers and Glendochart.

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 2.

His son obtained Balloch and Glenlyon, together with the hereditary bailiary of the districts surrounding Loch Tay, and cadets of the house, set up in these various holdings, proved as flourishing as the parent tree.

Thus all "MacGregor's Glens" had passed into the hands of the Campbells. The dispossessed clan saw with deep resentment the prosperity of those who had replaced them, and the ill-feeling between them and the lairds of Glenorchy steadily increased.

V

The Scottish government had as yet devised no satisfactory method of keeping order in the Highlands—or, for that matter, in the Lowlands. When complaints were made to them, the Privy Council would summon the offenders to answer for their conduct. If they did not come—and they rarely came—they were "put to the horn"; that is, denounced as rebels and outlaws if they continued contumacious. Much they cared for a horning proclaimed at the cross of Perth, when they were safe in the wilds of Drum Alban! To be put to the horn was rather a feather in a young man's cap than anything else.

When any outrage more hair-raising than usual occurred, the last resource of the government was to issue "Letters of Fire and Sword"

against the guilty party. These Letters were commonly granted to some great landlord, who was for the moment in good repute in Edinburgh. They authorised him to attack the delinquents with whatever force he could raise, burn their houses, harry their lands, and kill all he could lay hands on. The remedy was probably worse than the disease, If the person commissioned to enforce the Letters were on good terms with the guilty party, he executed them in the most perfunctory manner; if, as was more common, he was selected for the task because he was a known enemy, then he used his powers to satisfy his private revenge, and with no real care for justice and order. If the criminals were members of a powerful clan, a pitched battle often followed; sometimes the wrong side won, and then the government were more helpless than ever.

The Highland landlords themselves were little concerned to put down disorder. Each man was ready to defend his own property, but had no idea of interfering with his neighbour's right to "lift" cattle from other districts if he so desired. It was generally understood that the Herd-widdifous — the Gallows-herds, as cattle-raiders were called—had the right to pass anywhere on their forays, so long as they gave the landlord a percentage of the stolen cattle. Bloody quarrels sometimes resulted

from the failure to pay this unofficial customs-duty.

"Gin ye be gentlemen," says an Aberdeen ballad, "Licht and come in;
There's meat and drink in my ha' for every man.
Gin ye be herd-widdifous, ye may gang by;
Gang doun to the Lawlands, and steal horse and kye."

Besides the regular occupation of cattle-raiding, feuds between the clans kept the Highlands in continual hot water. In the districts where the MacGregors were settled, there was always trouble brewing. All the clans hated the Campbells. Atholl was jealous of Argyll. Menzies of that ilk was at feud with the Stewarts of Garth. MacFarlane of the Arrochar was at feud with Colquhoun of Luss. The Drummonds and the Murrays were bad friends. The MacDonalds and Camerons in Lochaber held themselves cheerfully ready to plunder their neighbours indiscriminately.

"Hership and stouthreif," murder and fire-raising, were everyday events, and a hundred episodes of crime and heroism, suffering and revenge and blind loyalty, passed away without record, or are commemorated only by a few stiff lines in some old chronicle, or a brief reference in the Register of the Privy Council. An old ballad has condensed into a few

flawless lines the spirit of these forgotten tragedies:

High upon Hielands and laigh upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell rade out on a day:
Wi' saddle and bridle sae gallant rade he—
Hame cam his good horse, but never cam he.

Doun cam his mither dear, greetin' fu' sair.
Oot ran his bonnie bride, rivin' her hair:
"My meadow lies green, and my field is unshorn;
My barn is to build, and my babe is unborn."

Saddled and bridled and booted rade he,
A plume in his helmet, a sword at his knee;
But toom cam his saddle, all bluidy to see—
Hame cam his guid horse, but never cam he.

"High upon Hielands and laigh upon Tay"—taking the name and the locality together, it seems likely that Bonnie George Campbell fell in with some wandering MacGregors as he rode.

In these disordered times, it would have been difficult for the Clan Gregor, with the best intentions to live at peace. Being without a landlord of their own the best they could do was to strive to obtain the countenance of some friendly chief; but conditions were such, that if one great man were well disposed to them, this very fact made them enemies elsewhere. They were in the position of the little states of Germany in the wars of the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, bound to go to the wall when their powerful neighbours quarrelled.

The presence of the Clan Gregor was an irresistible temptation to any great man who carried his feud with another, but did not wish, or did not dare, to attack him openly. There, ready to his hand, were the Broken Men; he could hound them out against his enemy, secretly promising them help and shelter afterwards; and then, if it proved too dangerous, he could repudiate and desert them. Thus he might satisfy his malice without danger to himself. The MacGregors were ready enough to accept such offers; the game was only too congenial to their minds; but if they had refused it would have offended the great man, who would revenge himself on them at the first opportunity.

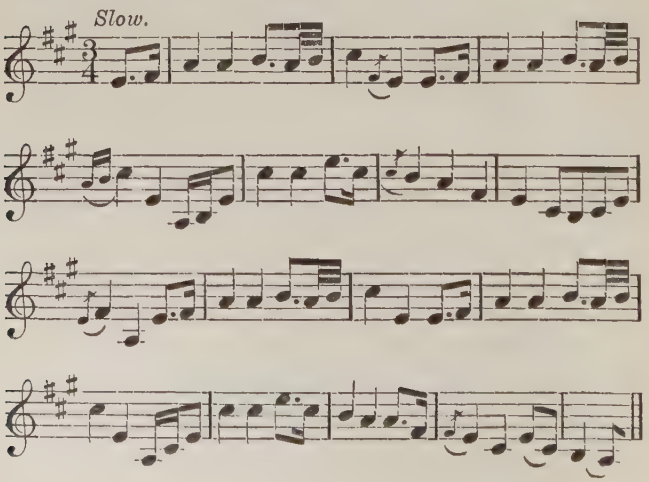
All things considered, the MacGregors were not really much worse than their neighbours; but a Campbell or a Stewart or a MacIntosh who killed his man or lifted a drove of cattle could, if necessary, fly for protection to his chief, and through such influence might obtain from the government a "precept of remission" for his crime, and get off scot-free. For the MacGregor there was no such refuge. He had no chief with a voice in the Council, no great landlord who, if he were driven from

home, could shelter him from pursuit. Nor could he go to the law for protection if he were oppressed; the law did not recognise his right to live. The law, moreover, was no friend to the weak and helpless. It was the powerful and the wealthy whose voices were listened to in the Scottish law-courts of those days, and what the Scottish people thought of their own system of jurisdiction may be guessed from two old proverbs: *A' law is no' justice;* and *Hame's hamely, quo' the deil, when he found himsel' in the Court of Session.*

The Clan Gregor were intensely conscious of their own friendless state. Anyone who wills can listen to-day to the voice of their desolation. They breathed it into a song, one of the most celebrated of Gaelic songs, the *Lament for MacGregor of Ruara.*

The Highlanders expressed their feelings, not in poetry—they produced extraordinarily little good verse—but in music. Their music is particularly rich in airs of lamentation. They are mostly airs for the pipes, and pipe-music is direct and passionate; it contents itself with the simple statement of some emotion, and it speaks straight to the heart. These airs breathe the pure spirit of grief, without attempt at reasoning or consolation. There are some that seem like the solemn accompaniment of a

funeral train—*MacFarlane's Lament*, *MacLean of Ardgour's Lament*. There is *Lochaber No More*—"That's a rare tune for a broken heart," said Burns, listening to it. There is *MacIntosh's Lament*, that is like one of those misty days when all the green glens seem to be weeping; and *MacCrimmon's*, with its reiterated "No more—no more—no more" that catches at the heart; and the little shadowy air wherein a regimental piper expressed the vain regret for a broken life—the *Lament for Hector MacDonald*. There is *Lord Lovat's*, the finest of all; and a hundred more. But there is none that more fully expresses the spirit of desolation than the *Lament for MacGregor of Ruara*.



There's sorrow, deep sorrow, heavy sorrow down-weighs me,
Sorrow deep, dark, forlorn, from which nothing can raise me:
Yes, my heart is filled with sorrow, deep sorrow undying,
For MacGregor of Roro, whose due is Glenlyon.

Now I will not complain, though a beggar should smite me.
If they wrong and disdain—oh heaven, who shall right me?
'Tis my pain they're not here, whom living, nought ailed me.
East in yon chapel lie the true hearts that ne'er failed me.

In old England, "a lordless man" was an object of distrust and contempt. Lordless, landless, without hope of betterment, the Clan Gregor became with each succeeding generation fiercer and more reckless. If *MacGregor of Ruara* expresses the forlornness of the clan, their angry resentment likewise found its outlet in music. The wild lilt of the *Reel of Tulloch* is, so tradition says, the spontaneous expression of an outlawed MacGregor's savage triumph, when he had killed or wounded the whole band of enemies who came against him. The *MacGregor's Gathering*, with its shrill insistent call, Scott interpreted in words with his usual felicity:

The moon's on the lake and the mist's on the brae,
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day.
Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful halloo . . .
But doomed and devoted by vassal and lord,
MacGregor has still both his heart and his sword—
Then gather, gather, gather, Gregarach,
Gather, gather, gather.

CHAPTER II

THE BROKEN MEN

A Highland lad my love was born,
And Lawland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithful to his clan—
My gallant braw John Hielandman.

BURNS.

I

IN the disasters that overtook the Clan Gregor, the normal organisation of the clan fell into confusion, and it is impossible to say with certainty which of the various petty chieftains who remained could really claim to be "MacGregor."

No material attribute of the chiefship now remained, except the *calp* voluntarily paid by loyal clansmen. It was only of importance when the chief was a man of sufficient ability and force of character to rally the clan around him, and make himself a real leader. If he were weak and unenterprising, some more energetic individual would surely take his place, for the position of the clan left no room for a *roi fainéant.*

Apparently the person with the best title to be chief at the beginning of the sixteenth

century was MacGregor of Glenstrae. This gentleman held his lands from the Earl of Argyll, and, being on good terms with his landlord, was in a comparatively safe position. The most distinguished individual of the clan, at this time, was Sir James MacGregor, Dean of Lismore, who lived in the ancient village of Fortingall at the foot of Glenlyon. He was a man of culture, and made an important collection of Irish and Gaelic poetry known as *The Book of the Dean of Lismore.* In that collection there are a number of poems addressed to MacGregor of Glenstrae, and hailing him as chief of the clan.

The wandering bards, often trained in the schools of Ireland, who spent their time guesting at one great house after another, would repay their host with an ode in his praise, if they were satisfied with their reception, while if they were displeased they made coarse and nasty epigrams about him. The MacGregors of Glenstrae were generous patrons of the arts, if we may judge by the flattering things said of them; and they must have been well-to-do, or it would not have been worth the while of the bards—a greedy, lying, foul-mouthed race—to praise them.

"MacGregor the brave, head of all the schools!" one calls him; to another he is, "the white-toothed falcon of the three glens,

bountiful friend of church and bards, of handsome form, by women loved."

"No trial of bravery or skill will show weakness in MacGregor," sings a third, "He it is that ever victory wins, liberal he ever was to bards!"[1]

This must have been in the more prosperous days of the house. By 1520 Glenstrae had become a very small man, living more or less quietly at Stronmelochan, and, for a wonder, on pretty good terms with his Campbell neighbours. John MacGregor, the laird of that day, had carried off by force and married Helen, daughter of Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy. Such summary methods of courtship were common in Scotland even at a much later date, and apparently made as happy marriages as any other. Anyhow the thing was done, and the Campbells decided to condone it, and accepted their unwelcome son-in-law with the best grace they could. When John MacGregor died leaving a son of fourteen to succeed him, the heir became the ward of his feudal superior, the Earl of Argyll, was brought up under the influence of the Campbells, and married a Campbell girl, daughter of the laird of Ardkinlas.

This close association with a hated enemy

[1] Skene and MacLaughlin, *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, pp. 114, 128, 139.

alienated the Glenstrae MacGregors from the rest of the clan, and the leadership slipped for a time from their hands. It was seized by a petty chieftain, one Duncan Ladasach, or the Lordly. He had been laird of a small estate named Ardcoille, but, having made the place too hot to hold him, he had fled to Rannoch. There he held the Castle in the Isle, gathered a strong band of outlaws like himself, and sallied out to plunder the country round, and especially the lands of Glenorchy.

> In the nicht the loud coronach, God wit,
> Was at our tail with mony roustie akes:
> We had the kye, and they gat bot the glaiks.

So Duncan is made to say in a contemporary poem; for his exploits were so daring that they made a great impression on the minds of his countrymen. The poem, *Duncan Ladasach's Testament*, was apparently written by an enemy, but it gives a not unsympathetic picture of the robber chieftain's mind, and some interesting details of his history.[1]

"I lovit never justice nor yet law," he is made to say, probably with truth:

> Now fareweel Rannoch with thy loch and isle,
> To me thou was richt traist baith even and morn.
> Thou was the place that wad me not beguile,
> When I have been oft at the king's horn.

[1] The poem is published in *The Black Book of Taymouth.*

The lawful laird of Rannoch was Menzies of that Ilk, who had hitherto been on good terms with the MacGregors. Glenstrae, for example, held of him peaceably the lands of Erochty on the north side of the loch. But when Duncan Ladasach began to use Rannoch as a base for his plundering expeditions, it was a very different story. Menzies was held responsible for the doings of those who occupied his lands; his neighbours complained to the Privy Council when their houses were burned and their cattle driven by outlaws from his territory, and he was summoned to answer. He could neither keep his unwelcome visitors in order nor turn them out, and accordingly in 1523 we find him complaining to the government that he ought not to be held responsible for the Broken Men of the Clan Gregor, because "the said MacGregor on force enterit the said (Menzies's) lands, and withhalds the samyn fra him maisterfully, and is of far greater power than the said (Menzies), and will not be put out by him of the said lands."[1]

Duncan Ladasach completely demoralised the Clan Gregor. It was under his leadership that they acquired the evil reputation that later dogged their steps and thwarted every attempt to save them. Unluckily, he got

[1] *Archæologia Scotica*, p. 141.

Glen Strae

The MacGregor Country : looking down Strathfillan to Ben More

even the young chief under his influence. As Glenstrae grew up, he naturally turned away from the Campbells and tried to regain his rightful ascendancy over his own clan; and Duncan was clever enough to make friends with him. At that time a young chief, on coming of age, was expected to prove his manhood by the performance of some exploit, which in practice usually meant leading a foray against some enemy.[1] Perhaps it was an affair of this kind that drew Duncan and his chief together. At any rate the cunning old free-booter soon got a hold on the young man's mind. He persuaded him to make an attack on the Campbells of Glenorchy, who were Duncan's bitterest enemies, but who were also Glenstrae's near kinsmen:

> I gart MacGregor wickedly pretend
> The house of Glenorchy to bring to ruin,
> Upon ane nicht to Glenlyon as they did wend,
> Baith young and auld that of that house was hend,
> With sudden fire we thought for to pursue,
> But they were wise, and weel our treason knew.

Next he led him to a wilder escapade. Glenstrae raided Strathbraan, burned the house of Trochry, and carried off captive Struan Robertson, the chief of the Clan Donnachie. Duncan cherished high hopes of a long career of "hership and reif," with the

[1] Martin, *Western Isles*, p. 101.

whole force of Clan Gregor behind him; but he was disappointed. Young Glenstrae died suddenly, and once more the Clan Gregor found themselves with a child for their chief.

> The brig brak, and we fell in the mire.
> MacGregor, of whom sae mony stood (in) awe,
> Out of the warld richt suddenly can fare.
> Wha suld trust in fortune ony thraw!

Glenstrae left a family of half a dozen boys, the eldest of whom was killed in a skirmish. It was the second, Gregor Roy, who succeeded him. The clan, left without a responsible head, selected Duncan Ladasach to be their captain, and made him the guardian—or tutor, as the Scots word was—of the young chief. The author of *Duncan Ladasach's Testament* makes his hero remark, with undue frankness,

> Their wit was weak, or else they wanted sleep:
> They gave the wolf the wether for to keep.

The laird of Glenorchy at this time was Sir Colin, called The Grey. He, after the manner of his house, was busy extending his influence on all sides. He looked greedily at the lands of Glenstrae, which lay so near his own, and now, when the MacGregor chief was a child, he seized the chance to weaken the clan and sow dissension among them. He turned his attention to the smaller men,

who were settled in the districts over which he ruled, and by threats and promises induced them to sign "bonds of manrent" with him. By these documents the MacGregors renounced their own chief, gave their *calp* to Grey Colin, and swore either to fight for him or to remain neutral if there was a quarrel between him and Glenstrae.[1]

One of these degenerate MacGregors was a certain Alasdair Our, who thus sold his birthright for a "tak" or lease of the lands of Morinch. Duncan Ladasach, as captain of the clan, deeply resented what he regarded as treachery. He was now a very old man, but he himself and his eldest son Gregor rode one November evening to the house of Alasdair Our, "at six hours at even under silence of nicht," dragged out the wretched man, stabbed him to death at his own door, and took his purse. Then they rode on to Killin, where they murdered in like manner John MacBain, a piper, who had also offended them. Such, at least, were the accusations brought against them by Glenorchy.

Grey Colin was not the man to let this outrage pass; but neither was he willing to file his own hands with dirty work if he could get anyone else to do it. He engaged various

[1] Chronicle of Fortingall, 1545; *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 64, 160, 177 ff.

persons to pursue, capture, or kill Duncan and his sons; but this led to nothing, and he was at last obliged to move himself.

Round the events that followed tradition has woven an elaborate legend of treachery and bloodshed. It is said that Glenorchy lured Gregor MacGregor to his castle, under pretext of making a peace, and there let loose a band of armed men on him. Gregor broke through them and tried to escape by swimming the Lochay; but he was wounded and weak from loss of blood, and was overtaken and cut down on the other side. His horse was then sent, as a token from him, to his father, and by this means Duncan Ladasach was induced to come to Finlarig, where he was seized, carried down the Loch to Balloch (Kenmore) and beheaded.

These details may be imaginary, and as a matter of fact contemporary records show that Gregor MacGregor was executed at Balloch with his father and a younger brother; but that the MacGregors were taken by treachery is indisputable. On 2nd May 1552, Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy entered into a formal reconciliation with Duncan Ladasach and Gregor his son, and signed a bond with them, declaring that he had forgiven them all their faults, "the zeal of love and guid conscience moving me to the samyn," while Duncan and

Gregor, in return, granted him the escheat of all their goods on their death.

Bees that have honey in their mouths have stings in their tails. Within six weeks of this moving reconciliation Grey Colin, notwithstanding his zeal of love, laid hands on his new friends and had them both beheaded at Balloch, upon the 16th of June 1552.[1]

In *Duncan Ladasach's Testament*, the old robber is made to take a last good-bye, both picturesque and ironic, of his one-time haunts:

Fareweel Glenlochay with thy forest free;
Fareweel Fernay, that oft my friend has been;
Fareweel Morinch, alas, full woe is me!
Thou was the ground of all my woe and teen.
Fareweel Breadalbane and Loch Tay so sheen,
Fareweel Glenorchy and Glenlyon baith,
My death to you will be bot little skaith.

Fareweel Glenalmond, garden of pleasance;
For mony fair flower have I fra ye tane;
Fareweel Strathbraan, and have remembrance
That thou sall never see Duncan again;
Atholl, Strathtay, of my death be fain,
For oft-times I took your readiest gear,
Therefore for me see ye greet not ane tear.

---

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 155, 177, 189-90; Chronicle of Fortingall, 1552; *Red and White Book of Menzies*, p. 180; *History of Clan Gregor*, p. 98.

II

Duncan Ladasach left several younger sons, but none of them had the capacity to succeed to the position he had held, and, alarmed at his fate, they fled the country. The Clan Gregor was left without any leader, and Glenorchy began again his policy of gradually sapping the chief's influence with a series of bonds of manrent. The boy, Gregor Roy, was sent to be fostered by Campbell of Glenlyon. As a cadet of the house of Glenorchy, and yet a good friend of the Clan Gregor, Glenlyon was acceptable to both the parties concerned.

By this time the effects of John MacGregor's marriage with Helen Campbell were wearing thin. The kinship had not deterred Glenstrae from attacking Glenorchy, as we have seen; and it could not be expected that Grey Colin, already overburdened with cousins of his own name, should feel any overwhelming tenderness for his step-sister's grandson. If Glenstrae had remained a tenant of the Earl of Argyll, probably Sir Colin would have kept on friendly terms with the young chief; but in 1554 Argyll transferred the superiority of the lands to Glenorchy, and henceforth it became the object of the new landlord to evict the MacGregors, and get the estate into his own

hands. So, when Gregor Roy came of age, in 1560, and applied to his landlord in the customary manner to be formally invested with his father's lands, Glenorchy refused to enfeoff him.[1]

The young MacGregor found himself, at the opening of his manhood, faced with ruin. If he meekly submitted and gave up his lands to Grey Colin, he would be helpless and penniless, without a prospect in the world. If he held the lands with the strong hand, Glenorchy would apply to the law-courts for a writ of eviction, and he would be denounced rebel and outlaw for refusing to comply with it.

Driven desperate, Gregor MacGregor took to the old courses of his people. From 1560 onwards he was a firebrand in Breadalbane, the hero of a series of wild exploits, raiding, plundering, and killing. No accusation of such a crime as Duncan Ladasach's murder of Alasdair Our is brought against him, but he seems to have waged a continuous private war against Glenorchy. Besides his own quarrel, it was his duty, according to Highland ideas, to revenge the death of Duncan Ladasach, his kinsman and tutor.

From the Register of the Privy Council we

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 200 ff., 131 ; *Red and White Book of Menzies*, p. 181 ; *Lairds of Glenlyon*, pp. 184-85 ; *Archæologia Scotica*, p. 147.

learn that the Clan Gregor "have massit themselves in great companies . . . and drawn to them the maist part of the broken men of the hale country, whilk at their pleasure burns and slays the poor lieges of this realm, reives and taks their guids, sorns and oppresses them in sic sort that they (Clan Gregor) are able to lay waste the hale bounds where they haunt, and bring the samyn to be (un)inhabitable, without the hastier remede be providit therefore."

In spite of their misdeeds, however, the outlaws were apparently not unpopular, for the Council went on to complain that "in all parts where they repair and haunt, they are reset by the inhabitants and indwellers thereof . . . and in sic wise fosterit and nourissit as gif they were the Queen's Majesty's true and faithful subjects and never had committit crime and offence in ony time bygane." It is easy to understand this. The MacGregors were chiefly occupied in harrying the Campbells; and none of the other clans had any objection to this.

The local landlords, in fact, were at their old games, secretly encouraging the MacGregors and setting them against their personal enemies, and then throwing them over again when there was any danger of their being called to account. We find, for example, the Earl of Argyll at one moment signing a bond with Glenorchy to

pursue Gregor MacGregor to the death, and a short time afterwards employing MacGregor for his own purposes and obtaining for him a pardon from the crown.[1]

But, if his neighbours veered this way and that in their dealings with the Clan Gregor, Glenorchy remained their constant and unremitting enemy. In 1563 he obtained from the government a grant of all the property of Gregor Roy and his brothers, "for the slaughter of Tearloch Campbell," and in the same year we read in the Chronicle of Fortingall, "Ane guid simmer and guid harist, peace and rest excep the laird of Glenorchy warreth agains the Clan Gregor."

Next Grey Colin went a step further, and carried the war into Rannoch itself. Poor Menzies was now almost in despair. He had no personal illwill to the MacGregors, and would willingly have let them alone if only he had not been held responsible for their doings. Shortly before this, the young Queen Mary, just returned from her upbringing in France, had visited Menzies in his castle of Weem, and heard from him the story of the outlawed MacGregors. She may even have seen Gregor Roy himself, and poor Mary had always a

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. i., pp. 248 f., 256 f. ; *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 209-12 ; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 132 ; Chronicle of Fortingall, 1565.

kindly eye for a spirited young man. At any rate, her interest and pity were awakened, and when she returned to the Lowlands she wrote to Menzies, begging him gracefully "to permit them to occupy the same lands they had of you before, and make them reasonable taks there upon the usual terms, as ye will do us thankful pleasure."

This was all very well, but when Gregor Roy entered upon his career of brigandage, Menzies did not want to be called on to stand the damages. At this difficult moment, Glenorchy approached him and offered to take the matter off his hands, and clear Rannoch of its dangerous tenants once and for all. Menzies accepted the kind assistance, and Glenorchy then contracted with the wild MacDonalds of Glencoe and Keppoch to drive the MacGregors out of the castle in the Isle of Loch Rannoch.

Menzies, however, soon found that his house was swept and garnished only for seven worse devils to enter in. The MacDonalds, encouraged by Glenorchy, established themselves in the empty castle, and proved far more troublesome than their predecessors. The real object of Sir Colin was obviously to frighten Menzies into making over Rannoch to him. Menzies, however, wrote to his friend the Queen, and she was not slow in acting. She wrote

Glenorchy a private letter ordering him to clear himself and his accomplices out of the country at once, and she put the law in motion to make sure that he should obey.[1]

Glenorchy, however, did not give up his plans. The constant disorders in Perthshire had vexed the government, and he induced the Council to issue Letters of Fire and Sword against the Clan Gregor. The landlords of the district were ordered to enforce them, but Glenorchy was the leader, and special powers were conferred on him. At the same time Gregor Roy of Glenstrae and his brother Ewin were specially denounced by name as rebels and outlaws.

The special commission proved very vexatious to the Grey Laird's neighbours. The Earl of Atholl at once protested, and got himself and his estates exempted from its operation. Next year came such an outburst of complaints that the commission was hurriedly recalled. Glenorchy had made use of it to harry all his neighbours indiscriminately, on the pretext that they were resetting the Clan Gregor, and had "nocht only allutterly abusit" his powers, "bot als under colour thereof has by himself and other wicked persons his complices . . . com-

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 147; Chronicle of Fortingall, 1563; *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 206-8; *Red and White Book of Menzies*, pp. 171, 188, 195; *R.P.C.*, vol. i., p. 289.

mittit sinsyne divers and sindry sornings, oppressions, herships, spulzies, yea and cruel slaughters, upon divers our saids Sovereign's lieges, nocht being rebels." In short, he had proved worse than the MacGregors themselves; and the only effect upon them apparently was, that while he was harrying Breadalbane, they transferred their operations further south, and laid waste the whole lordship of Menteith so effectively that it had to be exempted from all taxation until the next harvest had grown.

It seems to have been Queen Mary who was the mover in recalling Glenorchy's commission. The warm-hearted girl proved herself more of a statesman than the callous politicians and ruthless and turbulent barons who sat with her round the Council board. She saw that the policy of evicting the MacGregors, without providing any new refuge for them, was the direct cause of all their lawlessness. "They cannot live without some rowmes and possessions," she said. She wrote again to Menzies, requesting him to allow the MacGregors to settle in Rannoch; and she issued a general pardon to the clan, remitting all past offences and receiving them into the royal peace.[1]

It was the one occasion on which the central government displayed the slightest sympathy

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. i., pp. 256, 269, 361, 390; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 151; *Red and White Book of Menzies*, p. 202.

or understanding for the position of the Clan Gregor, and it did not last long. The young Queen was soon too deeply involved in troubles of her own to think more of the Highland outlaws; and a fresh tragedy embittered the feud between Gregor Roy and Glenorchy.

Grey Colin had reaped little profit from his plan of forcing the MacGregors to sign bonds with him. As soon as their chief came of age, they repudiated these engagements and returned to their old allegiance. Among those who had thus revolted were the two sons of the Dean of Lismore, who still lived at Fortingall. In 1565 James MacGeStalkeir, or the Son of the Hunter, a hanger-on of Glenorchy, descended upon Fortingall by night, murdered the Dean's sons, and fired the house. He undoubtedly acted with the connivance of Glenorchy, and so unprovoked and ferocious was the crime that a royal warrant was issued to the relatives of the dead, authorising them to pursue the murderers and freeing them from any obligation to keep the peace. But Gregor Roy, as chief of the clan, thought it his place to take vengeance himself. A few weeks later he fell on the murderer of his men, and killed him and his followers. "They were wicked and oppressors of the poor, and the said malefactors could not be suffered to live upon the earth," said the Chronicler of Fortingall, himself a

MacGregor, and no doubt regarding the deed as an act of piety.[1]

Glenorchy was henceforth more determined than ever to have his revenge on Gregor Roy. At present MacGregor was in the royal favour, and he could do nothing. But he knew how to wait: *he said naething, but he yerked at the thinking.*

Gregor Roy's life was not entirely occupied with feud and foray. He had found time for courtship and marriage. In his boyhood at Glenlyon he had fallen in love with Marion Campbell, the laird's daughter. One tradition says it was a runaway match, against the will of her parents; another, that her father secretly favoured Gregor Roy, but that her mother, a Campbell of Lawers, hated him and in the end betrayed him. However it was, they were married, and their first child, Alasdair, the subject of this book, was born in 1567.

It was two years after this that Glenorchy thought the time had come to move. Queen Mary was now a prisoner, and could no longer interfere; and the government were always ready to listen to complaints against the Clan Gregor. Sir Colin obtained a commission to take and execute Gregor Roy. In May 1569 he induced Atholl and Lawers to join him in an agreement to pursue Gregor to the death.

[1] Chronicle of Fortingall, 1565.

Menzies refused to sign it. But Campbell of Glenlyon, father-in-law of the man whose death was being planned, put his name to the paper.

They hunted Gregor Roy for a year, and the legend of his adventures was long preserved in Glenlyon. It was said that his young wife returned to the shelter of her father's house, and that he visited her there secretly, at night. But they were betrayed, and Gregor fled for his life, escaping his pursuers by jumping the Lyon at the spot that is still pointed out as "MacGregor's Leap." Then his wife left her home again and joined him in the hills. They were hiding in a cave in the heights above Loch Tay, when Gregor was surprised and taken by Glenorchy's men.

With the royal commission in his hand, Sir Colin had himself[1] the authority to act as judge, even if his power as baillie of the district had been insufficient. The trial was hurried through, perhaps at Finlarig, where you can still see to-day the ancient holly tree, under which the lairds of Glenorchy sat in judgment. Then they took him down the loch to Balloch, where executions were commonly held.

There is an old Gaelic song, supposed to

[1] *Archæologia Scotica*, p. 147; Hist. MSS. Co., Breadalbane Papers; *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 213; *Red and White Book of Menzies*, p. 203; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 160 f.; Stewart, *Highland Parish*, p. 13 f.

be spoken by Marion Campbell as she lulled her child to sleep:

Had there been twelve of his race, and my Gregor at their head, my eyes would not be dim with tears, nor my child without a father.

They laid his head upon an oaken block; they poured his blood on the ground; oh, had I a cup I would drink of it my fill.

Oh, that my father had been sick, and Colin in the plague, and all the Campbells at Balloch in chains!

I would put Grey Colin under lock, and Black Duncan in a dungeon . . .

Oh, that Finlarig were in flames, proud Taymouth lying in ashes, and Red Gregor of the White Hands in my arms again. . . .

Other men's wives sleep soft in their houses; I stand by the wayside wringing my hands.

For the rest, we have only the brief record of the Chronicle of Fortingall: "1570, the 7 day of April Gregor MacGregor headed at Balloch."

CHAPTER III

DRUMMOND-ERNOCH

It stands me hard, quoth Andrew Murray,
Judge if it stands not hard with me,
To enter against a King with crown,
And put my lands in jeopardy.
The Outlaw Murray.

I

Alasdair MacGregor, the new chief, was three years old at the time of his father's death. He cannot have had more than some vague oppressive memory of trouble and terror; but he must have been familiar with the story from his earliest years. If his mother lived, it would be both her instinct and her duty to train up the son to avenge his father.

It is possible, however, that Marion Campbell did not long survive her husband. There is no mention of her name again, no record of her death—she disappears from our knowledge. There was a younger boy who, tradition says, was a posthumous child, and perhaps the mother died at his birth.

The Clan Gregor did not long leave their chief's death unavenged. In August 1570,

Black Patrick MacGregor, son of Duncan Ladasach, fell on Grey Colin as he was passing up Glenfalloch, and killed fourteen of his men. About the same time the Gregarach in force descended on Glenorchy itself, and laid waste the whole district. Sir Colin's letter to his steward on this occasion is still extant, and shows the Grey Laird in a not unpleasing light. He gives instructions as to the feeding and housing of his harried tenantry, and promises to replace their stolen stock; and he ends with a pious hope that "the plague of God will light upon them and their posterity out of memory that molests me and you at this present."[1]

But these incidents served to show Sir Colin that he had stirred up a wasps' bike about him, and that even now it might not be safe to press things to extremity against the Clan Gregor. He had his family troubles, too—a bitter quarrel with his eldest son. At any rate, he apparently did not try to drive the MacGregors out of Stronmelochan, but left them alone.

Alasdair remained under the care of his uncle, Ewin MacGregor, who was his tutor and Captain of the clan during his minority. Ewin was the next brother of Gregor Roy,

[1] Chronicle of Fortingall, 1570. *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 430.

and had married the sister of Gregor's wife, Mary Campbell of Glenlyon. There were also two younger brothers, Alasdair Galt, or the Travelled, and Duncan of the Glen, who obtained small holdings from the Earl of Argyll, and in time married and begot children of their own.

The position of Captain of a Highland clan, during the minority or incapacity of a chief, was one that called out the best in a man. It had heavy responsibilities, and no reward save that of a good conscience. Popular opinion expected of the Captain an absolute devotion to the interests of clan and chief, and an entire forgetfulness of self. Ewin the Tutor acted now with a prudence which perhaps he might not have shown had he been in real truth chief, and responsible to no one. For fifteen years he kept the turbulent Clan Gregor at peace, or as nearly so as was possible in the Highlands, and avoided any fresh disaster. In the second volume of the *Privy Council Register*, which covers this period, the Clan Gregor is not once mentioned, a striking tribute to their good behaviour.

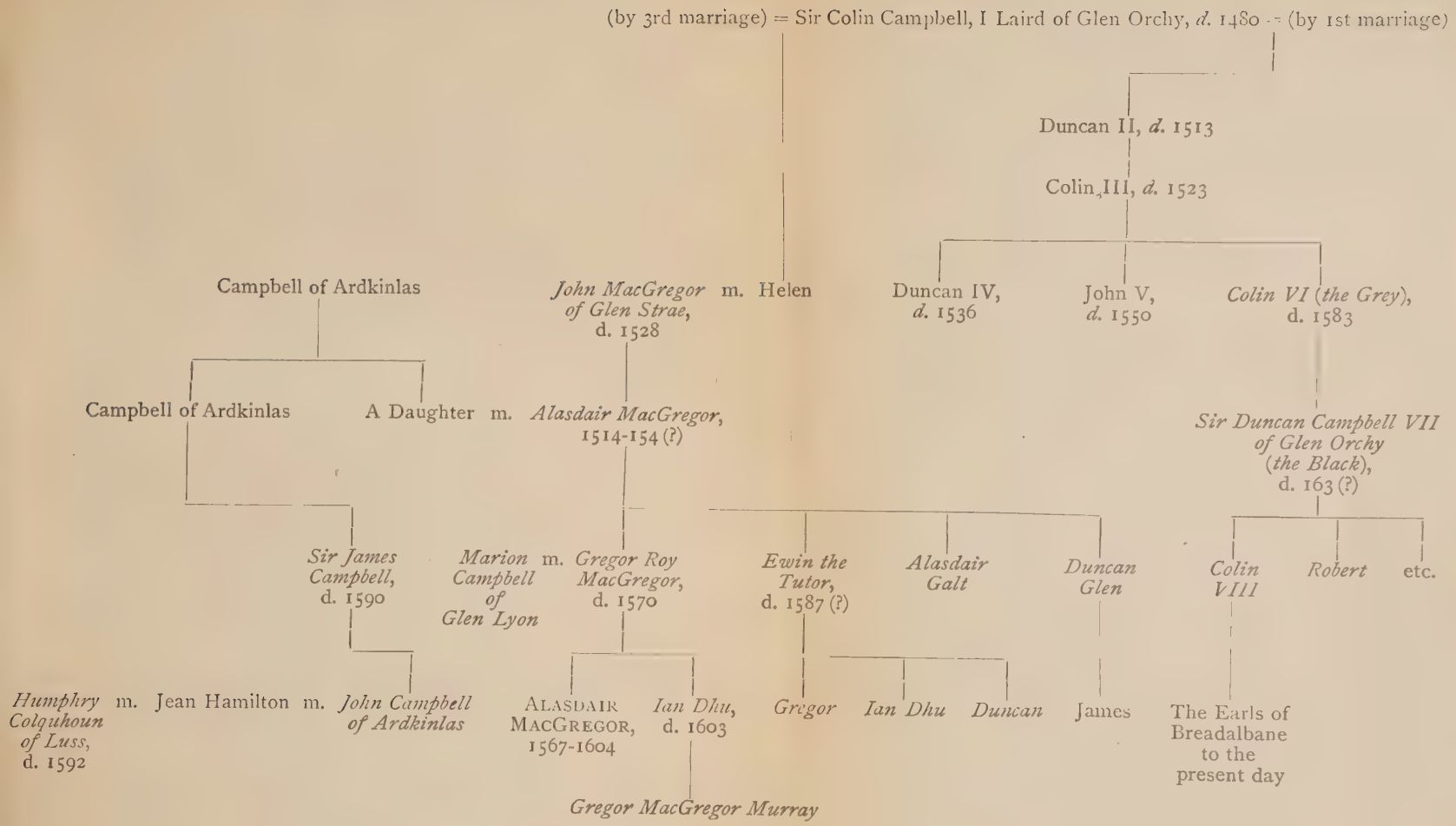
During this quiet time the little boys at Stronmelochan grew up into proper young men. Alasdair Roy, the young chief, was probably the eldest, and must in any case have been the leader of the group. He had a younger

brother, Ian Dubh, later called Ian Dubh nan Lurach—Black John with the Coat-of-mail. Then there were the Tutor's three sons—Gregor, Duncan, and another Ian Dubh.

They did not go to school. Few Highland lairds at that date sent their sons to school or college, though they were under a legal obligation to do so: Scotland at that date had probably the wisest laws of any country in Europe, and the worst enforced. The exception was the Campbells who, wise and wealthy, knew the value of education and would send their boys to the Lowlands, or overseas to France and Spain, to get it. But even had young Alasdair aspired so far, probably no school would have been very willing to receive such a wild young hawk: *tod's whelps are ill to tame.* He grew up wholly illiterate. In 1596 we find him setting his name to a document, "with my hand touching the notary's pen underwritten, because I cannot write."[1]

Religious instruction, it is likely, was almost equally wanting. It was a time of transition. The Presbyterian Kirk was still finding its footing in the Lowlands, and for long after this was quite unable to procure ministers of its own persuasion to serve in Highland parishes. The Catholic Church was proscribed, and its endowments had mostly fallen into the hands

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 272.


(by 3rd marriage) = Sir Colin Campbell, I Laird of Glen Orchy, d. 1480 = (by 1st marriage)
Duncan II, d. 1513
Colin III, d. 1523
Campbell of Ardkinlas
John MacGregor of Glen Strae, d. 1528
m. Helen
Duncan IV, d. 1536
John V, d. 1550
Colin VI (the Grey), d. 1583
Campbell of Ardkinlas
A Daughter m. Alasdair MacGregor, 1514-154 (?)
Sir Duncan Campbell VII of Glen Orchy (the Black), d. 163 (?)
Sir James Campbell, d. 1590
Marion Campbell of Glen Lyon
m. Gregor Roy MacGregor, d. 1570
Ewin the Tutor, d. 1587 (?)
Alasdair Galt
Duncan Glen
Colin VIII
Robert
etc.
Humphry Colquhoun of Luss, d. 1592
m. Jean Hamilton
m. John Campbell of Ardkinlas
Alasdair MacGregor, 1567-1604
Ian Dhu, d. 1603
Gregor
Ian Dhu
Duncan
James
The Earls of Breadalbane to the present day
Gregor MacGregor Murray

of lay landlords. Long before the Reformation, indeed, it had been losing its hold on the people, owing to the moral degradation of the priesthood, which was perhaps more intense in Scotland than in any other country. Over great tracts of the Highlands the churches stood empty or fell into decay, and ministers of either creed were wanting.

It is unlikely that the MacGregors would be eager to adopt the new religion. Their neighbours, the Campbells, had taken to it with enthusiasm, and that in itself would be an argument against it. Probably Alasdair grew up half heathen, his religion consisting of half-forgotten and imperfectly understood Catholic ritual handed down from the past, and of far more ancient superstitions, relics of a lost faith, that still survived among these hills. For his people still practised their age-old nature-worship, though its meaning now was lost. They still brought home the Maiden —the last handful reaped—with songs and dancing, at harvest-time. They still on May-Day lit their Beltane fires, and sacrificed to unknown gods, and propitiated the wild beasts of the mountains, saying, "This I give to thee, oh Fox, spare thou my lambs; this to thee, oh Hooded Crow; this to thee, oh Eagle."[1]

[1] Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, p. 97.

In other parts of a gentleman's education Alasdair was well instructed. Hunting and fighting were the chief accomplishments of a Highland laird. He learned to fight with sword and dirk—the dirk was held in the left hand, and used for parrying. The Lochaber axe was also a favourite weapon in the Highlands; it was a long-shafted axe with a curved prong, which was especially useful in storming camp or castle, for the prong was hooked over the edge of wall or stockade, so that the man might swing himself up with it. The bow was also used; it continued, indeed, to be employed by Highland deer-poachers up to the end of the eighteenth century, for its silence made it infinitely more serviceable to such gentry than the gun. An old rhyme describes the ideal outfit of the Highland archer:

> Bow from yew of Esragin,
> Eagle feather from Loch Treig,
> Yellow wax from Galway town,
> And arrow-head made by MacPhederan.

Alasdair was a keen hunter, and particularly skilled in the making of arrows. In a Gaelic poem addressed to him, he is himself called The Arrow of Glenlyon:

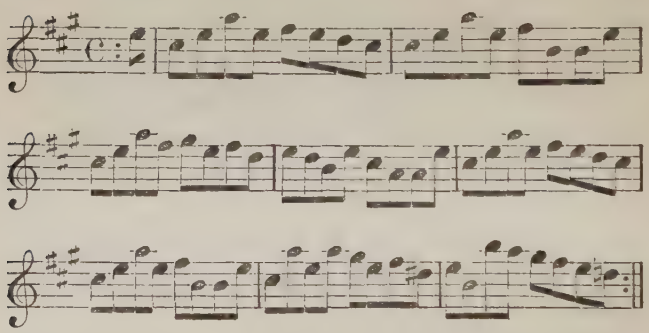
Would I could see thee again in the hills of the deer,
With keen-edged spear and hounds in leash, following the chase;
Often the king of the forest fell to thy bow of yew—

Terror of all our foes, pride of Glenlyon!
Thou wert a skilled fletcher, thy quiver ever full.
See how the sharp arrow is winged with the eagle's plume,
Bound with silken thread, red and green, from Ireland,
Waxed to shield the polished shaft from the heat of the sun.

There was game in plenty for the hunter, though the countryside, now stripped bare to make a nursery of deer and grouse, was then overgrown with primeval forest. The capercailzie was still common, and beasts that are now rarely seen there, wild-cat and foumart and badger. Salmon swarmed in the rivers. The fallow-deer was not known yet, but there was the great "white stag" to hunt, and the wolf still made his lair in every rocky glen.

Alasdair learned also to swim like a fish, as will be seen later, no doubt splashing in and out of the Orchy at Stronmelochan constantly with his playmates. He learned how to find his way on the uncharted hills, and to travel for two days on end with no food but a handful of oatmeal, and no drink but the running streams, and fight at the end of it, as his people could. The boys had their games, too. Shinty and football were both popular in the Highlands, and they contended together in sports, running and jumping and putting the stone.

In the evenings there was music and dancing.

They danced the old Highland sword-dance, now lost, and other dances that were the forerunners of the reels and strathspeys of to-day. The piper, striding up and down, made the roof ring with the boasting tune of *MacGregor's Rant*:—

Or they sat round the fire and told tales and sang songs. The bards sang again the praises that had been made for the old MacGregors of Glenstrae. Alasdair might learn from these what stuff his ancestors were made of, and what his clan expected of himself.

> He never knows peace; he's in the throat of all his fellows!

one poet ecstatically cried of the bygone MacGregor. Another called him,

> The man who robs the Saxon, and ever puts his trust in the Gael.

A third praised the clan :—

> The famous race without a fault,
> Round him like a fence they stand,
> Clan Gregor who show no fear
> Even when with the King they strive . . .
> Constant in the hunt together
> Are MacGregor and his fierce men,
> Often as the blood-red hounds
> Entered the forts of Clan Boisgne.

It could hardly be expected that, with these for his nursery-rhymes, the little Alasdair would grow up with much respect for law and order.[1]

There can have been but little discipline in such an upbringing. The boy was the hope and darling of his clansmen, surrounded by those who made it their business to flatter him and indulge his wishes, and to foster every trace of proud and violent and revengeful feeling he showed. He must have been taught always to think of himself as injured and outlawed, to think that the law and government were his most persistent enemies, and that he must fight for his own hand in a hostile world. He must have learned that he was the only hope and stay of his dispossessed and harried clan, to whom they all looked for leadership and protection.

[1] Skene and MacLaughlin, *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, pp. 114, 129, 142 ; *Black Book of Taymouth*, Acts of Baron Court, 1621 ; Pennant, *Tour*, p. 194 ; *New Statistical Account ; Adventures in Legend, etc.*

They called him Red Alasdair. It cannot have been a very distinctive nickname, for the MacGregors were a red-haired clan. Pennant, two hundred years later, was informed that they were still recognisable among their neighbours by the redness of their hair and their mischievous dispositions. We can imagine an active young man, strong and alert, with the light eyes and freckled face that go with red hair—that type of red Highlander of which Raeburn's portrait of Colonel MacDonell of Glengarry gives a fine example—graceful and self-possessed in his manner like all Highlanders.

He had never seen a town, unless it were Argyll's town of Inveraray—a little group of thatched houses huddled between the Earl's great castle and the shore of Loch Fyne. The hills made up his world: the peaks of naked stone and long slopes of shale and gravel; the high mountain moors, where the blaeberry and the great orange cloudberry grow beside the black peat-mosses; the long lochs, burning blue in the sun or blanched under driving rain; the glassy-clear amber-coloured rivers, that in spring come down roaring green with melted snow; and the little tinkling burns that run slyly between hanging banks of rose-red heather; the silver birchwoods, where boys and girls go courting

because their leaves smell so honey-sweet; and the fir-woods, that are so thick that the sunlight only comes into them like a brown haze, and men walking in them look wan as ghosts.

Very old were the firs, twisted and thrawn with age. Their crimson stems and smoke-black foliage had seen Fillan come the first to preach of Christ in the glens of Breadalbane; had seen the Roman eagles come to the fight at Mons Graupius; and seen the Great Goddess of the prime, one-eyed and shadow-faced, honoured among these hills. The wind in their branches sang the thin murmuring song it sings to-day, when Alasdair MacGregor rested in their shade after the hunt; singing always how men die and pass away, and youth in its pride and beauty goes down into the darkness, *and there is no remembrance of former things, neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.*

II

Ewin MacGregor, the Tutor of Glenstrae, seems to have been a man of some standing in his own country. He was a guest in great houses, for we find him witnessing documents, bonds and contracts, for various important personages. With all the goodwill in the

world, he could hardly have kept the Clan Gregor at peace by his own unaided efforts. They had a bad name, and would get no credit for good intentions. Their enemies were powerful and unrelenting. The government, hitherto occupied with the political and religious struggle in the Lowlands, now began to turn their attention to the north, and in 1582 they sent special justice-courts to the Highlands to re-establish order, the Privy Council stating that, owing to "the lang troubles that was amang them during the disobedience of the Clan Gregor and others broken men of the far Hielands, (they) could not weel abide his Highness's laws, nae criminal justice in effect being holden there this twenty-nine years bygane."

In this situation the best course for Ewin was to find some great man who would take the Clan Gregor under his protection. He found one, rather unexpectedly, in the person of one of the Campbell cadets. Sir John Campbell of Calder was the descendant of the heiress Muriel Lamont and her captor. He was a man of capacity and standing, "who had spent the most of his time at court, where he learnt all the subtilities thereof," as Sir Robert Gordon tells us. About 1581 Ewin the Tutor and his brother Duncan of the Glen signed a bond with Calder, agreeing to

forward all his lawful affairs, and not to hurt or see him hurt, while Ewin, in 'case of his own death, appointed him guardian to his son Gregor. In return, Calder began to interest himself effectively in the affairs of the Clan Gregor.[1]

Three years after this the Earl of Argyll died, and Calder was chosen one of the guardians of his little son. Thus Ewin's protector had suddenly become one of the first men in Scotland, and the Captain of Clan Gregor, who was now on very friendly terms with him, found himself and his people gradually involved in matters of high policy and schemes of a dark and doubtful nature.

Whether owing to Ewin's prudent management, or to the patronage of Calder, things went on very quietly for the Clan Gregor. There were occasional hints of trouble. Duncan of the Glen and Alasdair Galt were summoned for poaching in the royal forests. Ewin himself was cited, in 1581, with several others of the clan, as being party to the death of one Duncan Stewart. He may, however, have been summoned merely as the responsible head of the clan, not as one of the actual actors in the deed; at least the affair blew over without any ill consequences. Things were so peaceful

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. iii., p. 501; Gordon, *Earldom of Sutherland*, p. 214; *Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 184.

that Duncan Ladasach's sons, Patrick and Robert, came back to Breadalbane and entered into some sort of reconciliation with Glenorchy.

Towards the middle of the Fifteen-eighties this passing blink of peace and prosperity showed signs of ending. In 1583 Grey Colin died. "He was ane great justiciar all his time," says the Chronicler of Fortingall, "through the whilk he susteinit the deidly feud of the Clan Gregor ane lang space. And besides that he caused execute to the death mony notable limmers, he beheadit the laird of MacGregor himself at Kenmore. . . . Notwithstanding his tyranny, his son and successor proved a still worse foe to us."

The last words are ominous. Grey Colin had grown very old—he was eighty-four when he died—and his last years had been occupied with family troubles. The son who succeeded him was a man in the prime of his strength, greedy and grim as his father had been, more daring, more ambitious, and of much greater intellectual power. Donacha Dubh nan Curich — Black Duncan with the Cowl—was between thirty and forty now. His portrait, perhaps by Jameson, shows us a countenance that matches well with the rather sinister sound of his by-name. He has black curly hair and a square beard cut *à la Henri Quatre.* The eyes are black too, small, piercing and suspicious, under finely

marked brows drawn into a perpetual scowl. The forehead is lofty and narrow; a shadow rests on it, that recalls the terrifying gloom on the brow of *Redgauntlet*. The cheek bones are high and prominent, the nose powerful, thick and bulbous. He is splendidly and sombrely dressed, and clutches a sword in his left hand. It is a remarkable portrait, and by all accounts Sir Duncan was a remarkable man.

As a landlord he was far ahead of his age, a great improver, builder, and planter. He built the Tower of Achallader, the island stronghold in Loch Dochart, and Barcaldine Castle in Benderloch. Round his many houses he laid out stately parks. He enforced an old statute ordaining that every Scottish cottager should plant trees about his house. The noble chestnuts that he set at Finlarig are still to be seen. *He that plants trees loves others besides himself*, says a Scottish proverb; but Black Duncan's love of mankind is questionable. The inventory of his possessions at Finlarig includes a gruesome list of instruments of torture, chains, and "heading axes." He quarrelled so viciously with his father that the old man actually attempted to disinherit him and leave his lands away—an unheard of thing in a feudal baron—and was apparently prevented from doing this only by the intervention of the Earl of Argyll. With what

gratitude Black Duncan repaid Argyll will be seen later. When Duncan did eventually succeed to the lands, he turned out his younger brother without a penny, and defrauded him of his share in the inheritance.

It was he who introduced fallow deer into Perthshire, and also "cunnings" or rabbits—that last a doubtful blessing. He was a great horse-breeder, and in one of their raids the MacGregors killed no less than forty of his brood mares and a stallion presented to him by the Prince Henry, son of James VI. He built the bridge over the Lochay, "to the great contentment and weal of the country."

Duncan was, though he does not look like it, very gallant. Besides an ample family of lawfully-begotten children, illegitimate sons and daughters keep turning up in the records, and in 1622, when he was past seventy, we find Patrick Murray writing to him on behalf of King James, that the King thinks it very unfair that he, "who has lived chaste of all women save his Queen," should be afflicted with the gout, while "you that has so largely bestowed your talent amongst them should scape both the gout and other diseases."

Black Duncan was also, perhaps, a poet; at least certain productions in verse, chiefly religious, are found written on the margins of his books—for he was a great reader, and

had a fine collection of books for the time. It is tempting to credit him with the authorship of an anonymous poem found among his family papers, for its tone of savage sarcasm seems appropriate enough :—

OF THE MACGREGOR'S ARMS.

The sword and fir-tree crossit beneath ane croun
Are fatal signs appropriate to this race,
By some foreseeing fellow weel set doun,
Meet for such limmers spoiling every place.
The croun presents the King's most royal grace
Ane richteous judge with skill wha does decree
That they and all sic cut-throats should embrace
His severe censure for their villainy,
To wit, gif ony frae his sword goes free,
Un-execute, continuing in their wrang,
He will erect ane gallows of that tree,
And thereupon them in ane widdie hang.
So far's my wits can serve, I can nocht ken
Ane better badge for sic ane sort of men.

P.S.

One thing yet rests that suld their arms befit,
If with Sanct Johnstone's ribbons they were knit.

"St Johnstone's ribbons" denote the hangman's cord. One can easily imagine Black Duncan, furious at finding his brood mares slaughtered and his new plantations trampled down, sitting down and dashing off this airy trifle, just to relieve his mind.[1]

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. v, 173, 221, 436 ; Campbell Collections, *Sheriff Books of Perth*, p. 43.

Sir Duncan was not long in taking up the old feud, which his father had allowed to rest for a while. His methods are illustrated by a document found in the family charter-chest. It is a tak of lands granted to Donald and Dougal MacTearlach, on the understanding that they in return shall "with the hale company and forces we may or can mak sall incontinent efter the date hereof enter into deidly feud with the Clan Gregor and sall continue therein and in making of slaughter upon them and their adherents baith privily and openly and sall by nae manner of way nor persuasion leave the same or . . . cease therefra unto the time the said Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy find himself . . . satisfyit with the slaughter we sall do and commit."

At the same time as this new and vigorous foe appeared, the young Chief of Clan Gregor was growing into a man, and was beginning to take his place as leader. In August 1586, when he was nineteen, he and Ewin the Tutor, and no less than 104 members of the clan were all put to the horn at Perth by Drummond of Drummond-Ernoch and some other gentlemen of Strathearn, whose lands had been plundered. There had evidently been a raid on a very large scale. Was this the exploit by which Alasdair, in the proper Highland fashion, first proved his manhood?

And did his sober guardian accompany him unwillingly, to give him the benefit of his wise advice, and try to keep him out of worse mischief? Probably not; such an episode as this might occur in the life of the most respectable Highland chief, and no doubt Ewin himself thought it high time that his nephew was blooded.

This is the last we hear of Ewin the Tutor. Apparently the Glenstrae family were short-lived; even if they were not cut off prematurely by violence, they rarely lived to grow old. Ewin died shortly after this, at what precise date is not known. The loss of the man who had guided them so wisely was an irreparable blow to the clan, and to no one more than to the passionate headstrong boy who now found himself called on to face a dangerous crisis.

Alasdair came of age in 1588, and applied in the usual manner to be invested with the lands of Glenstrae. Black Duncan, like his father, refused the investiture. When Alasdair went to the sheriff-court of Perth to have himself served heir, Glenorchy appeared in person to oppose his return, and the proceedings were stopped.[1]

So Alasdair MacGregor, like his father before him, was met at the first step in life by this fatal blow; he, too, faced the alternative,

[1] *Archæologia Scotica*, p. 147.

ruin or outlawry. It must be remembered that the action of the lairds of Glenorchy was very unusual at this period. The ancient titles of the Clan Gregor to their lands were older than the feudal law that had superseded them. In other European countries, in France and Germany, such ancient prescriptive rights as these are usually taken into account by the law. Only in England and Scotland they are to this day ignored, and at the moment when I write there are Scotsmen in prison for attempting to assert these rights.

It was at this moment, when his heart was still hot with resentment at the injury and insult that had been put upon him, that Alasdair MacGregor was called upon to make the choice that was to decide his fate and that of his clan.

III

The MacGregors of Balquidder were, by their situation, less under the control of their chief than those of Rannoch and Breadalbane. They had a feud of their own with Drummond of Drummond-Ernoch, the same who had just summoned the clan for hership and reif. Drummond-Ernoch was the King's Keeper for the royal forest of Glenartney and the Steward of Strathearn. He chanced one day to seize certain MacGregors poaching deer

there, and summarily hanged them. The victims were of the family of Black Patrick, Duncan Ladasach's son ; they were the wildest of their clan, mere brigands, known by the suggestive name of MacEagh—Children of the Mist. But deer poaching was generally considered a very honourable occupation by the Highlanders, and Drummond-Ernoch's action caused intense resentment among the whole clan. It was considered necessary to take special assurances for his safety, and these were given by the Earl of Huntly on behalf of the Clan Gregor in 1588.

The King of Scots, James VI., was now twenty-four years old, and a marriage had been arranged for him with the Princess Anne of Denmark. He determined to go himself to Copenhagen to fetch home his bride, like a hero of romance—though in other respects poor James was very ill-qualified to play that part. In the early autumn of 1589, Drummond-Ernoch was warned that a great feast was to be prepared for the return of the royal couple, and he rode out into Glenartney Forest to see to the supplies of venison. By ill-luck he was alone when he fell in with three or four of the Children of the Mist, poaching as usual. They must have thought fate had delivered their enemy into their hands, when they met him thus in the lonely glen. They killed him, and

took his head, and started homewards with their trophy.

As they came over the high hills from Glenartney, the peak of Ben Voirlich was above them, and the long oval of Loch Earn below, on the right. On its banks they saw the house of Ardvoirlich, and they knew that Drummond-Ernoch's sister was married to Stewart the laird. Drunk with blood and triumph, they resolved to go there and make a brag of their deed. Perhaps they knew the laird was away; at any rate they presented themselves boldly at the door and asked for food. Hospitality was the first duty of the age, and though the Lady Ardvoirlich cannot have liked the looks of her guests, she had them in and set them down at table. When she left the room to give orders to the servants, they took out the dead man's head and set it on the table, and one of them, as the tale goes, thrust a piece of bread into the mouth, bidding it, "Eat that, for you have eaten many a good meal in this house."

The lady, returning, saw her brother's head, and fled shrieking from the house. She was found, after long search, by her husband and friends, wandering half mad in the hills. Her child was born soon after; he grew up a moody, savage, treacherous man, who came at last to murder and treason. He was the

original of *Allan MacAulay*, in Scott's *Legend of Montrose.*

Such is the story that tradition has woven round the murder of Drummond-Ernoch. The murder itself is indisputable fact, and so is what follows.

Still carrying the head, the outlaws fled to their own people. None of the startled servants at Ardvoirlich dared lay hands on them. Now that the first exultation had passed, they must have been terrified at what they had done. More than a common killing lay to their charge—they had slain the King's Steward in the execution of his office. They had only one refuge—they flung themselves on the protection of their chief.

Perhaps they concealed from him the more revolting incidents of their exploit. They came to him in pride and terror, having killed their enemy on his own ground, and with the avengers of blood at their heels. He was a spirited, undisciplined boy, called on for the first time to exercise his leadership, already, at twenty-one, proscribed by the law, cheated of his inheritance and with his prospects blighted for no fault of his own.

He summoned the whole Clan Gregor to meet in the little graveyard at Balquidder, where many of the clan lay buried. It lies in the mouth of a lovely glen, almost on the shore

of a little deep blue lake called Loch Voil. All about are steep heathery hillsides, sung by Tannahill, the Braes of Balquidder. Up the long glen you can see the peak of Stobinion, the twin of Ben More, shaped like the thorn of a rose. In spring or summer it is peacefully beautiful; but this was autumn, when all that countryside turns red as fire; rust-red bracken, rust-red bells on the withered heather, the blaeberry leaves red as blood, the rowans burning scarlet among the brown leaves on the tree.

Before the assembled clan, the severed head of Drummond-Ernoch was set upon one of the tombstones, and Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, advancing, laid his hand upon it and swore he would take the blood-guilt upon his own head and never reveal the names of the murderers. One by one, according to their rank, his clansmen followed him; each in turn set his hand on the head and swore the oath; they could not refuse to follow their chief. Surely the wild young man must have been fey when he plunged so eagerly into disaster; *he hasted to his doom like a moth to a candle.*[1]

The news soon reached Edinburgh, and roused the government to fury. The outrage

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. iv., p. 453 ff.; *Lairds of Glenlyon*, p. 192; Scott, *Legend of Montrose*, etc.

was so daring, and the subsequent conduct of chief and clan so recklessly perverse and lawless, that it undid in one moment all the good done by the quiet rule of Ewin the Tutor. From this time onward the MacGregors were regarded by the government as incorrigible criminals—*like the tod's whelps, aye the aulder the waur*—and at the moment the Privy Council resolved to get rid of the lot of them by one sweeping measure.

Upon the 3rd of February 1590, "the Lords of Secret Council, being credibly informed of the cruel and mischievous proceedings of the wicked Clan Gregor, sa lang continuing in blood, slaughters, herships, manifest reifs and stouths," outlawed and condemned to death the whole of the clan for the murder of Drummond-Ernoch. A commission was issued to Huntly, Atholl, Argyll (or his guardians), Glenorchy, and other landlords, authorising them to "seek, tak, and apprehend" Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, Black John his brother, Duncan of the Glen and Alasdair Galt his uncles, and 135 other members of the clan there named, together with "all others of the Clan Gregor or their assisters, culpable of the said odious murder, or of theft, reset of theft, hership and sorning." They were to be tried at a special assize held on the spot, and if found guilty were

to be executed immediately, their possessions going half to the State and half to the person who had apprehended them. If they defended themselves, they were to be pursued with fire and sword, and the commissioners were acquitted of any violence or killing committed in the taking of them, and were never to be called to account for it.

Similar commissions had been issued against the Clan Gregor before, but this one far exceeded them all in its scope and extent, and in the strictness with which it was enforced.

The Drummonds and Stewarts were of course most interested in the pursuit of their kinsman's murderers, and flung themselves into the business heartily enough. Scott quotes a letter written by Lord Drummond to Buchanan of that Ilk, in which he set a tryst for their forces to gather and systematically sweep certain glens, "and take a sweet revenge for their cousin, Drummond-Ernoch." But it was again Campbell of Glenorchy who proved himself the most bitter foe of the MacGregors. Before even the royal commission was issued, he had offered his services to the Drummonds against the clan, and when the commission came he was the most active in carrying it out.[1]

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. iv., p. 453; Introduction to *A Legend of Montrose; Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 244.

In August 1590 he applied for legal authority to evict Alasdair from the lands of Glenstrae, thinking no doubt that he had now a very good chance of making his ownership effective. He was deceived; the very violence of the persecution, the savagery with which the commission was enforced, drove the MacGregors to desperation, and they defended themselves stubbornly.

Driven from their homes, they gathered in large companies here and there, seeking out strong places among the hills. They enlisted with them the broken men of other clans, bound themselves to mutual loyalty with unlawful oaths, and from their strongholds sallied out to plunder, with a new zest, the lands of their enemies. Nor do they seem to have been cast down by their misfortunes, but rather stimulated to defiance: the Privy Council reported that they "uttered a disdain as it were to his Majesty, . . . giving proud and disdainful speeches, and using of sindry treasonable and extraordinar deeds." And, in the teeth of Black Duncan and his writs of ejectment, Alasdair continued to hold Glenstrae.[1]

In the time of need the young chief proved himself a man after his clansmen's own hearts.

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. iv., p. 509.

Chief of Stronmelochan, child of the king!

says *The Arrow of Glenlyon:*

We could find in thee no fault, in body or in mind;
Firm in council, cunning to plan, wise to foresee.
Like the storm was thy face in the field;
The bravest went down before thee, when flashed on the fight
The steel of Clan Gregor, the day-star of life.

This desperate fight for life lasted for a year or more from the passing of the Act of Council. But the MacGregors, if they had a dangerous enemy in Glenorchy, had also a faithful friend in Sir John Campbell of Calder. He had not abandoned his protection of the clan with the death of his friend Ewin the Tutor, and he did not forget them now. Calder and Glenorchy—the two leading men of Clan Campbell, now that the Earl of Argyll was a child—had become involved in a strange and sinister train of events, into which the Clan Gregor was now caught up, at first to their advantage but in the end to their destruction.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONSPIRATORS

Woe to the land that has ower young ane king!
There is nocht ellis bot ilk man for himself.

Sir David Lindsay.

I

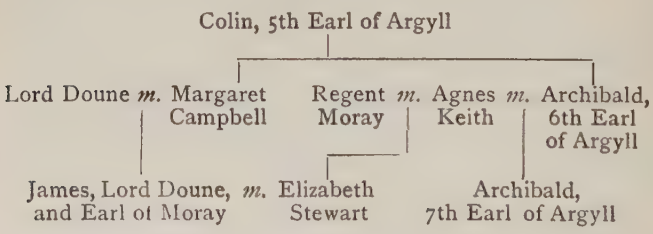
In 1561 the Earl of Huntly, leader of the Catholic party in Scotland, chief of the great House of Gordon, and Cock o' the North, rose in rebellion against the Protestant Lords of the Congregation, who had the young Queen in their hands. The two armies met at Corrichie:

Murn, ye Hielands, and murn, ye Lawlands,
I wot ye hae mickle need,
For the bonnie burn o' Corrichie
Has rin this day fu' reid.

It was a black day for the Gay Gordons. The power of the clan and the Catholic cause went down together. The old Earl fell in the mêlée, and his son, less fortunate, was carried a prisoner to Aberdeen, to die on the scaffold. The rich lands of Moray were taken from the House of Huntly, and conferred upon the Queen's bastard brother, the Lord James Stewart.

When Mary was forced to abdicate, Moray was made Regent for his baby nephew, King James VI. Four years later he was assassinated, leaving no male heir, but only two daughters. He left also a young widow, Agnes Keith, who married as her second husband Archibald, sixth Earl of Argyll. Now it happened that Argyll's sister had married a Lowland nobleman, Lord Doune, and it was now arranged that her son should marry the Regent's eldest daughter. Young Doune therefore became Earl of Moray, and with the land and title he took over the Regent's feud with the Gordons.

It will be seen that there was thus a very close connection between the houses of Moray and Argyll. Argyll was Moray's uncle and step-father of Moray's wife :


Colin, 5th Earl of Argyll
Lord Doune m. Margaret Campbell
Regent Moray
m. Agnes Keith
m. Archibald, 6th Earl of Argyll
James, Lord Doune, and Earl of Moray
m. Elizabeth Stewart
Archibald, 7th Earl of Argyll

Argyll died in 1584, and the great earldom of the west, with all its still green glens guarded by trackless mountains, its hundred castles and ancient kirks called by the names of forgotten

Celtic saints, its mines and fisheries and unrivalled herds of cattle, came into the hands of a little boy of nine. Six guardians were appointed for him, all gentlemen of his own clan: Sir John Campbell of Calder, Sir James Campbell of Ardkinlas, Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy, Dougal Campbell of Auchinbreck, Archibald Campbell of Lochnell, and Neil Campbell, Bishop of Argyll. Of course there was rivalry and dissension among them; and the widowed Countess naturally drew closer than ever to her daughter and son-in-law in the Lowlands.

The late Earl's will had provided that no important step should be taken in his son's affairs without the signatures of Calder, Ardkinlas, and the Bishop. This had the effect of concentrating the real power in the hands of these three and, as was soon shown, Calder was the ruling spirit among them. He was a politician and a courtier; he was on intimate terms with the greatest man in Scotland, Maitland of Thirlestane, the Chancellor; and, more important still, he had got the Countess on his side. They were soon very thick together, and Calder flung himself whole-heartedly into the family interests and the Argyll-Moray alliance.

The exclusive influence which Calder thus obtained was very unpleasing to most of his

coadjutors. Auchinbreck was a mere country laird, who counted for nothing and was ignored by the rest: but Ardkinlas and the Bishop began to grow jealous, and Glenorchy bitterly resented his exclusion from the inner committee that controlled affairs. He began to cast about for means to strengthen his own position, and found a ready tool in Lochnell.

Lochnell was one of those unlucky beings who have by their own character and abilities no claim to distinction, but who acquire an undue importance by the accident of position. He was the next heir: if little Earl Archibald and his brother were out of the way, Lochnell would be Earl of Argyll. Children so often died young in those days! He cannot but have speculated on the future. Meantime, he, who should have been, as he thought, the chief man of the clan, saw himself ousted by Calder, and slighted and neglected by all. He fretted and sulked, but if left alone he would probably have done nothing.

Black Duncan was on no friendly terms with Argyll. He had conveniently forgotten the services rendered to him by the late Earl, and said that "his house had ever found greater friendship in other gentlemen than in his chief." He owed money to the Countess, which apparently he was in no hurry to pay. Argyll had not been a year in his grave when he had already

persuaded Lochnell to sign a secret bond with him in which they pledged themselves to support each other against all others saving only the King and their chief.[1]

Calder, however, was far too wary to be caught napping. The very next year he got round the poor fool, Lochnell. He visited him in his island castle in Lorne, taking with him Ewin MacGregor, the Tutor of Glenstrae. He played, no doubt, on the man's greed, made large promises, and induced him to sign two papers. By these the two declared themselves unsatisfied with the present guardians of the young Earl, agreed to get him into their own hands, and swore to forward one another's interests. Ewin witnessed the agreement. What precise steps they took in furtherance of their designs is unknown, but the result was what might have been anticipated. Calder used Lochnell for his own ends against Ardkinlas; strengthened his own position more effectively than before; and then left him in the lurch.

He was perhaps unwise to despise his tool so completely, Lochnell was of course more resentful than ever. The last straw was when the Countess slighted him in some manner—perhaps she did not like the way he eyed her little boys. He returned to his old allegiance

[1] *Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 187; Hist. MSS. Reports, *Breadalbane Papers; Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 234.

and fell an easy prey to Black Duncan. Glenorchy had now the advantage: he had not only Lochnell but it was easy to get Ardkinlas to support his plans also. Next year, 1588, they won over the Bishop. Ardkinlas invited him to his house, and there he was persuaded to sign a declaration that "knowing the upright mind and will that Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy bore to the Earl of Argyll their chief and to his honour and the quietness of his subjects and country," he would "prefer the said Glenorchy to all others except the King, and follow his counsel."[1]

Things were therefore ripe for a quarrel between Calder and Glenorchy, when the murder of Drummond-Ernoch precipitated the break.

II

It is clear that Calder had a goodwill to the Clan Gregor. No doubt he found them useful tools, and perhaps he was statesman enough to see that the harrying of the clan did not conduce to the peace of the Highlands. At first he kept quiet, till the worst of the storm should blow over. He was one of the persons appointed to carry out the commission against them, but he did it, to say the least, very half-heartedly. So

[1] *Thanes of Cawdor*, pp. 188-9; *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 242-3.

did Ardkinlas, who was, it may be remembered, a cousin of Alasdair MacGregor. By the influence of these two, the MacGregors were reset and sheltered in Argyll when they were hunted out of Breadalbane. Black Duncan complained to the Council, and in July 1590, Ardkinlas and Calder were ordered to find surety to aid Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy against the MacGregors, on pain of being reputed art and part with the same clan.

Apparently no notice was taken of this order. Alasdair and his men were safe in Argyll, and in August emerged to harry the lands of Auchnafree, belonging to Campbell of Lawers, where they killed one man of Lawers', three of Glenlyon's, and a lad of Glenorchy's. Black Duncan thereupon raised every man he could and marched against them. This time they retreated to their favourite stronghold in Rannoch. He forced the passes, but only to find that they had taken wives, bairns, and goods, and fled to Atholl. There the Earl of Atholl's bailie received them kindly, sheltered them in the house of Blair itself, and, calling up the countryside against the hated Campbells, marched to meet Sir Duncan and drove him and his followers pell-mell back into Breadalbane.

Black Duncan appealed again to the Council, angrily denouncing both the gentlemen of

Atholl and the guardians of the Earl of Argyll, for resetting the Clan Gregor. The Privy Council summoned Atholl to answer the charge; but before anything was done, the tables were suddenly turned on Glenorchy.

Presumably Calder had been at his friend the Chancellor. Black Duncan was summoned in his turn, cautioned to keep the King's peace, and ordered to make satisfaction to various individuals who were complaining against him for acts of violence. Next day, on 18th December 1590, "the King's Majesty with the advice of the lords of Secret Council grants and gives license to Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy, knight, to contract, bond, enter into friendship and reconciliation of all by-past quarrels, deadly feuds, controversies and debates standing between him and the surname of Clan Gregor . . . and to the effect that the said friendship and reconciliation may be the more perfect, grants and consents also that such persons as the said Sir Duncan has presently in his custody, being friends, assisters and dependers upon the said Clan Gregor, be put to liberty and freedom, and suffered to pass where they please."[1]

When it is remembered that the MacGregors were still technically under sentence of death for the murder of Drummond-Ernoch, it will

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. iv., pp. 509, 541, 556.

be seen that some powerful friend was working for them at court; and that Calder was the mover will presently appear.

Sir Duncan's sudden desire for peace and reconciliation was anything but spontaneous. To leave his slaughtered men and harried lands unavenged, to swallow the insult he had received from the Atholl men, to unclench his grip from his prisoners and let them go free, must have gone sorely against the grain with him. The first attempt to make the agreement seems to have been a failure. In March 1591 the household books of Glenorchy note, "the Clan Gregor coming and ganging all the week." They must have found it strange to be in and out of that hostile house; but all the "coming and ganging" led to nothing, and in July Calder himself set a tryst between the MacGregors and Sir Duncan at Kilchurn Castle, "for componing of their variances."[1]

Black Duncan was forced to the rendezvous bitterly against his will. Not only his gorge rose at the unnatural peace-making, but he must have felt he was helping to swell the triumph of Calder. Sir James Campbell of Ardkinlas had died, and Calder seemed to be supreme. Young John Campbell, Sir

[1] Hist. MSS. Co., *Breadalbane Papers; Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 179.

James's son, was present at the conference. He had not his father's ability or position, but he was married to Sir Duncan's sister Annas, and he was a possible ally. Glenorchy took him out to walk among "the sauchen trees at the loch-head." Pacing there, with the water on one hand and the half-circle of great hills on the other, with the glens of Strae and Orchy both in full view, the soft mild air of that sheltered place about them, and the midges—inevitable accompaniment of a July day in the Highlands — biting, Duncan broke out into furious invective against Calder.

"'What think ye,' says he, 'how I am misusit at this time by Calder his maintenance of the Clan Gregor?'"

It was not the first time these two had talked of Calder's overbearing ways, and Sir Duncan went on to remind Ardkinlas of the old grudge between Calder and his father. Then, seeing that this was well received, he passed to darker hints.

"'If he were away there is nane worthy of his room but I. As for Lochnell he is little guid worth, and as for the Bishop if he did not as we did we suld send him hame to his buiks. Then,' says he, 'I and ye suld guide all efter our awn will and whatsomever commodity might be spyit out that suld be equally parted between us baith. . . .'"

"'How can that be done?' said Ardkinlas doubtfully.

"'Cause some able young man to shoot him in his travelling,' said Black Duncan, 'or in a thack house where he usit commonly to lodge.'

"'It is not possible to be done. Word sall be gotten of it . . .' said his trembling accomplice.

"'Why so?' answered Glenorchy, 'If the man who shoot shall eschape efter the deed done, you and I are not worthy to live if we cannot cut him away directly, and if he be presently slain we have the less ado sae that nae man sall know who has done it, he having nae hand writ thereupon.'"[1]

Meantime the peacemaking was ended. A contract was drawn up and signed between Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae on one hand, and Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy and various other gentry of the district on the other, by which both parties pledged themselves to abstain from mutual robbery and slaughter, and to keep their followers in order or be responsible for their misdeeds.[2] This done, the conference broke up.

[1] The conversation is reported verbatim in Ardkinlas's confession, *Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 180 ff.

[2] I think it may be reasonably concluded that the contract to this effect in the Perth Register, quoted by Gregory in *Archæologia Scotica*, p. 46, was the one signed on this occasion.

Six months later the friends of the Clan Gregor succeeded in obtaining from the government a pardon for Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae and all his followers for their share in the murder of Drummond-Ernoch; and the King was declared to receive them into grace and favour as his "lovites." It must have been the last straw for Black Duncan.

III

The Laird of Glenorchy did not cease to ply his young friend. When they left Kilchurn, they went together down Loch Aweside and over the pass to Inveraray, where they were lodged together in "the old tower." There, as they lay in bed, a plot was concluded between them. A second contract was drawn up, "conforme to the communing we had upon the Coich of Glenorchy, anent the cutting away of Calder, the inbringing of him (Sir Duncan) to be my Lord's (Argyll's) Governor, and the division of all commodities as is spoken of in the 4 article," says Ardkinlas. Glenorchy wrote out a duplicate of the document, and each man kept his own copy. Upon Ardkinlas was left the responsibility of finding the "able young man" who was to undertake the murder.

Black Duncan, who was as prudent as he was unscrupulous, would not have ventured so far

Inveraray Castle and Dunniquaich

Stronmelochan, Glenstrae. Ben Lui in the distance

if he had not had powerful allies to back him. He knew that Calder was now hand in glove with Moray, and that this had brought on him the enmity of Huntly and the Catholic party.

While the Highland chiefs were thus absorbed in their own petty politics the fate of Scotland was hanging in the balance. During the minority of King James, the Presbyterian party had won the upper hand; but their victory was even now by no means assured. The King was now a man, and he did not favour Presbytery. The Chancellor Thirlestane—the prime minister of the day—was a moderate man, who wished to hold the scales equal between the two religions and the two political parties who upheld them.

Huntly, son of the old Earl who had gone down among the horses' feet at Corrichie, was the leader of the Catholic party. Apart from his religion, he was a man with a grievance. The Earldom of Huntly had been restored to him, but not the lost lands of Moray, and he still coveted these.

The young Earl of Moray, with whom Huntly cherished his feud, was by chance also the favourite of the extreme Presbyterian party. He was not much of a statesman, but he was a convinced Protestant and the Regent's son-in-law, and that was enough. Moray was a

lively young man, with taking ways and the handsomest face in Scotland. The common people, who were staunch upholders of the Kirk, had chosen him as their darling; they called him "The Bonnie Earl," and whispered to each other that the young Queen, Anne of Denmark, looked on him with a favouring eye.

He was a braw gallant; he rade at the ring:
And the Bonnie Earl o' Moray, he might hae been a king.

He was a braw gallant; he played at the glove:
And the Bonnie Earl o' Moray, he was the Queen's love.

James had never been popular; and now, when the white-faced, peevish, rickety baby had grown into a feeble, timid, pedantic young man, he was less popular than ever. The commons despised him because he was unsteady on his legs, and distrusted him because he was known to be desirous of taming the Kirk. Whether or not it was true that Moray was "the Queen's love," popular sympathy was all with him and Anne. James saw it, and it did not make him like either Moray or the Presbyterians any better.

The Chancellor also had his reasons for disliking Moray. Not only he hated the extremists, but he knew that the Queen hated him and had urged the King to dismiss him. Thirlestane had opposed the Danish marriage, and Anne knew it; her grudge against him

and her liking for Moray alike drew her to favour the Presbyterians. The Chancellor, on his side, began secretly to intrigue with Huntly; "not so much," says Sir Robert Gordon, "for the favour he did bear unto Huntly, as for the hatred he had conceived against the Earl of Moray . . . not caring, in the meantime, what should become of Huntly, or Moray, so he were rid of both."[1]

It needed only a spark to kindle the fire that was already smouldering. Huntly was strengthening himself with bonds of Manrent in every quarter—with the Catholic Earl of Errol, with Lord Spynie, with Menzies, the Highland chiefs of the north-west, Colquhoun of Luss, Campbell of Glenorchy, and Campbell of Lochnell. Moray was ware of his doings, and Calder's position also was threatened by the alliance. They drew up a secret contract on their side, and brought in Atholl, the Grants and others—a contract directed in fact, though not in name, against Huntly. Shortly after, fighting broke out between the two parties in Morayshire.[2]

The Presbyterian ministers, who at this time combined most of the functions of press and parliament, blamed the Chancellor for the

[1] *Earldom of Sutherland*, p. 214.

[2] *Spalding Club Miscellany*, vol. ii., p. 93; vol. iv., pp. 238, 241, etc.; *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 244.

disorders in the north. He was in it deeper than they guessed. He, Huntly, and Glenorchy had made a secret treaty also. They had got poor feckless discontented Lochnell wholly in their hands, and they soon secured also Stewart of Appin and MacDougall of Lorne, both old enemies of Argyll. By this treaty the signatories pledged themselves to procure the death of John Campbell of Calder, James, Earl of Moray, and Archibald, Earl of Argyll. It provided also for the division of the spoils. Glenorchy was to have Loch Awe and Benderloch, Appin a strip of Lorne, MacDougall the Isle of Luing, and the Chancellor the barony of Pinkerton in Haddington, which belonged to Argyll and which marched with his own estate of Thirlestane. Lochnell was the pigeon to be plucked—they did not leave him much of his earldom but the title. Huntly, of course, would hope to get back his lost lands in Morayshire.

The dangerous game of tackling Moray was left to the Chancellor and Huntly. Glenorchy undertook to get rid of Calder and, as we have seen, chose young Ardkinlas as the means.

The young man, scared and irresolute, took some time to screw his courage up to the point of acting. In October 1591, Calder visited Moray at Doune, and it seemed likely

that they were plotting some fresh move. Ardkinlas at last chose his man—one Gillipatrick MacEllar, a hanger-on of his own; and he also obtained the services of John Oig Campbell, a younger brother of Lochnell. As MacEllar had no gun, Ardkinlas lent him his own "reid-stockit hackbut" for the occasion. On 4th February 1592—exactly one month after the royal pardon was issued to the Clan Gregor—Gillipatrick MacEllar with the "reid-stockit hackbut" shot Calder dead through the window of the house of Knipoch in Lorne, where he was staying.[1]

IV

Meantime Huntly and the Chancellor had made full arrangements to carry out their part of the work. This was the time when the extraordinary exploits of Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, were keeping Scotland in a ferment. Bothwell was a strange being, probably mad and certainly a witch. He had been arrested on a charge of high treason. Several unfortunate men and women, witches of the coven of which Bothwell was deputy devil, were executed for compassing the King's death; but Bothwell himself escaped from prison, tried to raise a

[1] Gregory, *Western Highlands*, p. 248 ff.; *Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 175 ff.; *Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 206.

revolt, and almost succeeded in kidnapping the King from Holyrood.

Moray was accused of being accessory to Bothwell's plot. His guilt is very doubtful; but the King had a morbid terror of witchcraft, and probably the Chancellor contrived to play upon this and frighten him into a panic. Perhaps he also made use of those floating rumours that Moray was the Queen's lover. At any rate it seems almost certain that King and Chancellor were equally implicated in the deed that followed.

Moray was first ordered to leave his castle of Doune and come to the House of Donibristle in Fife. He obeyed: and when he was thus separated from his own followers, he was summoned to answer the charges made against him before the Privy Council, and Huntly—of all men in Scotland—was sent to bring him in. He appeared suddenly by night at Donibristle, with a strong troop of horse, and Moray, learning who he was, naturally refused to surrender himself. Huntly attacked the house, and it was fired and carried by storm. Several of Moray's friends were killed in an attempt to break through, but the Earl himself got out of the house and fled along the seashore. He was detected in the darkness by the burning tassels of his cap, which had caught fire as he escaped. One of Huntly's men—

it is said to have been Gordon of Gight, ancestor of Lord Byron—overtook him and cut him down. Huntly himself came up next moment.

"By God, my lord, you shall be in this as deep as I!" cried the murderer. He thrust his dirk into his chief's hand, and forced him to strike. Huntly stabbed the wounded man in the face. "You have spoiled a better face than your own," said Moray as he died.

Ye Hielands and ye Lawlands, oh where hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl o' Moray, and hae laid him on the green. . . .

Oh lang will his ladye look frae the Castle Doune,
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray come soundin' through the toun!

All next day the House of Donibristle smouldered, and a column of smoke was visible to the King and his party, who were hunting in Fife; but it was remembered afterwards that His Majesty made no inquiries as to the cause.

When the news reached Edinburgh, a pretence was made of calling Huntly to account. He was imprisoned for a short time; but he was soon released, and it was clear that the King and the Chancellor meant that he should get off scot-free.

Law-makers shouldna be law-breakers.

Thirlestane found that he had gone too far, and raised a storm he could not weather.

> Oh then rose up all Edenborough,
> They rose up by thousands three . . .

The commons were furious at the murder of their favourite, and indignant at the inaction of the King, which was everywhere put down to his jealousy. The Presbyterian leaders were likewise maddened by the triumph of the Catholic Huntly. The ministers thundered from every pulpit, and the King fled from his capital in a fright. Thirlestane saw himself faced with ruin, and took the one chance of safety that offered: he flung himself into the arms of the Presbyterians.

One of the Gordons of Gight, who had been in prison since the fight at Donibristle, was hanged for his share in the murder. In May Parliament met, and so did the General Assembly of the Kirk. The Chancellor was then found to be in close alliance with the Presbyterian ministers. Together they forced on an unwilling King and Parliament the great Act which established an extreme Presbyterian form of Church government, and which was to have so far-reaching an effect on the destinies of the Scottish people.

The Chancellor had saved himself, but only by the skin of his teeth; he still held his office,

but he was obliged to go into retirement for a time, owing to the hostility of the Queen. Huntly was safe in the north, but only for the moment, for the ministers were already urging measures of proscription against the Catholics. And the worst of it was, that though the plot had been so far successful, no tangible reward could be reaped by the plotters until another step had been taken. The young Earl of Argyll remained, and while he was still alive Black Duncan could not touch Lorne nor the Chancellor Pinkerton, and Lochnell might hanker in vain for his earldom.

Both Huntly and the Chancellor had had a lesson, and Thirlestane must have heartily regretted his dabbling in the plot. But the Highland chiefs were in a different case. Their part of the scheme had been completely successful. In the sensation caused by Moray's death, the murder of Calder had passed almost unnoticed, and no one dreamed of connecting the two. Black Duncan was eager to go on.

It was, however, too risky to proceed against the young Earl immediately, and in the meantime there was one weak point in the plot. Gillipatrick MacEllar was still alive and at large; what if he betrayed them? Every time Glenorchy met Ardkinlas, he urged him to have the "able young man" killed, and so

put an end to the danger. Ardkinlas was weak, but obstinate. He was very much frightened, and he was very fond of Gillipatrick MacEllar, who seems to have been half servant, half friend—perhaps a foster-brother. Glenorchy gave the poor fellow no peace. He badgered him unceasingly, luring him to Finlarig that he might get at him the better. There one day, as Ardkinlas relates, "he lying sick and I sitting on his bedside, he usit the same language, . . . when I borrowit from him ane thousand merks for which he has my obligation and siller wark in pledge."[1]

It is a singular picture that rises before the imagination of Black Duncan, sick and fevered in his bed, passionately urging his friend to murder, and prudently making sure of the security for his thousand merks. *A man's mind is a mirk mirror.*

Caution or fear had seemingly kept Ardkinlas from telling his formidable brother-in-law that he had blabbed to John Oig Campbell also. Meantime MacEllar remained at large, and Black Duncan, finding his efforts in vain, determined to make sure of his own safety at least. He met Ardkinlas at Dunoon, where there was a conference of the clan on some business about the earldom, and one day took him out alone to "ane little green knowe

[1] *Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 183.

whereupon broom grows." They lay on the grass talking, watching the young Argyll, who was playing football with his companions a little way off. Glenorchy persuaded his accomplice to give him a look at his copy of the contract for the murder of Calder; and, having once got it, he put it in his pocket and refused to give it back. Instead, he brought out the other contract, wherein he, Huntly, Lochnell and the rest had pledged themselves to procure the death, not merely of Calder, but of Argyll and Moray also.

Ardkinlas was terrified, and recoiled in horror from the thought of murdering his young chief. He refused to put his name to the contract, as Glenorchy wanted him to do, and at last Black Duncan went off in a passion, declaring that "he was unhappy ever to have to do with me or such a beast as I was," says Ardkinlas.[1]

But the young laird was now too deeply in the toils to escape. Danger threatened from an unexpected quarter. The young Argyll was only seventeen, but these were times which forced boys into premature manhood, and he had already begun to display remarkable vigour and intelligence. He had somehow learned that Glenorchy had a bond with Huntly, taxed him with it, and angrily desired him to break it. "Bairns behovit to have fair words," said

[1] *Highland Papers*, vol. i., p. 187.

Black Duncan drily to Ardkinlas; but for his part he meant to stick to Huntly.

Ardkinlas could not afford to be so independent. The Earl showed him an unfriendly face, he grew thoroughly frightened, and knew not where to turn. He had "heard tell that the women in Lorne are wiser nor the women in Argyll," and that the wife of his confederate, John Oig Campbell, was something of a spaewife. John Oig had prudently gone off to Ireland, but the woman, Margaret Campbell, was at home, and Ardkinlas sent for her and begged her to be his intermediary with the Lorne witches, and "nowther to spare gowd nor gear to convert my Lord's (Argyll's) anger and wrath in his (Ardkinlas's) favour."

There is something a little pathetic in the wretched man thus trying for supernatural aid in his despair. John Oig's wife willingly undertook his errands, and in her subsequent confession we can learn various queer facts about the Lorne witches and their ways. But her curiosity was aroused, and she suspected something more than a mere family quarrel. She knew her husband had had some private dealings with Ardkinlas, and she told him that she was in all her husband's secrets. Thus encouraged, poor Ardkinlas poured all his troubles into her attentive ear, and she learned that her man was mixed up in doings that

might cost him his head. When John Oig returned from Ireland, she urged him to save himself by revealing the whole plot to Argyll; but John Oig said that he "could not wrak his awn brother"—that is Lochnell.

The plot was now known to too many, and someone played traitor. Rumours got about that Ardkinlas knew something about Calder's death. Argyll heard them; he was beginning to act for himself, and his position as Lord Justiciar of Scotland gave him great powers. In 1593 he arrested John Oig Campbell and Gillipatrick MacEllar, and had them both put to the torture. He extorted a confession implicating Ardkinlas, but no one else; even in his extremity John Oig was loyal to his brother. Having got all he could out of them, Argyll hanged his two prisoners without further delay; and that was the end of the "able young man."

Ardkinlas was now in a frenzy of terror, and was at last induced to fall in with Black Duncan's schemes. At the opening of 1594 Argyll had a serious illness, and it seems that an attempt was made to poison him, in which Glenorchy was again the mover and Ardkinlas the agent. It was unsuccessful. The Earl recovered and eagerly took up the pursuit of his enemies. Ardkinlas was summoned before the Privy Council to answer the charge made against

him by John Oig and MacEllar. Threatened with torture, he revealed the whole plot, and his confession was corroborated by Margaret Campbell with additional information that she had got from her husband.

V

In the meantime the Chancellor had recovered place and power. An heir had been born to the throne of Scotland—afterwards Henry, Prince of Wales—and the King wanted to take the child away from its mother. Anne fought hard for her baby, and the Chancellor won pardon and favour by supporting her. The King's confidence he had always possessed. But all this was to be wrecked, it seemed, by the inopportune revelations of Ardkinlas.

Alarming discoveries of a more political nature had been made. Huntly, Errol and Angus, the three Catholic earls, were found to be in secret communication with Spain, for the purpose of preparing a new Spanish invasion of England. Hitherto the King had refused to take action against the Catholics, but now it was necessary to do something to satisfy the Kirk. Thirlestane used his official influence to suppress Ardkinlas's confession, and it never reached Argyll; and at the same time he pleased the young Earl by issuing a commission against the Catholic leaders, which he was to carry out.

Huntly, Errol and Angus were all declared rebels, and their lands were forfeited, and Argyll went north with all the force he could raise.

On Towie Mount I met a man,
Weel graithed in his gear;
Quoth I, "What news?" He then began
To tell a fite of wear,
Saying, "The ministers, I fear,
A bloody browst have brewn,
For yesterday withouten mair,
Upon ane hill at Strathdoun,
I saw three lords in battle fight
Right furiously awhile;
Huntly and Errol, as they hight,
Were both against Argyll. . . .

MacCailein More cam frae the west,
Wi' mony a bow and brand,
To waste the Rinnes he thought best,
The Earl o' Huntly's land.
He swore that nane should him gainstand,
Except that he were fey,
But a' should be at his command,
That dwalt benorth of Tay.

The two armies met at Glenlivat. Argyll had the stronger force, but his men were Highlanders, and Huntly had both cannon and horse; and

The Highland men are clever men
At handling sword and shield,
But yet they are too naked men
To stay in battle field . . .
There's not a man in Highland dress
Can face the cannon's fire.

The Lowland cavalry carried all before them, and Huntly won a complete victory. The young Argyll—he was just eighteen—was forced by his friends from the field, sobbing with rage and disappointment. When the news reached Edinburgh, the King, who did not love his powerful Campbell cousin, is said to have remarked, "Fair fa' thee, Geordie, for sending him hame a subject!"[1]

The battle, however, had done one great service to Argyll. He had not yet learned of Lochnell's treachery, and the heir, unsuspected, had accompanied his chief to the field. Tradition says he made a last attempt to betray Argyll to the enemy: if so, it recoiled on his own head. Lochnell was killed in the fight, and all the elaborate conspiracy against Argyll was brought to nothing.

The work of scotching Huntly was undertaken more successfully by the King himself; and at the same time the attempt to bring Calder's murderers to justice was stifled. Ardkinlas was induced to recant his confession, and make a new declaration, in which he stated that he alone was guilty. In return the Chancellor saw to it that he was never brought to trial. He was kept in prison month after month: three times the court met to try him,

[1] Geordie = Huntly. Argyll had a claim, not too remote, to the Scottish Crown.

and on each occasion it was postponed by royal command. At last, as none of the King's advocates appeared to prosecute, the judge was obliged to order that the prisoner should be released. As for Glenorchy, he had got off even more lightly. No attempt had been made to summon or arrest him. He was informed of the charges made by Ardkinlas against him, and contented himself with a flat denial. When the fall of Huntly showed that he had backed the wrong horse, he contrived with his usual cunning to reconcile himself with his chief, and while Ardkinlas was still languishing in gaol, Black Duncan had already induced the young Earl to sign a paper, promising to discredit all rumours spread by evil-disposed persons against his loving kinsman Glenorchy, and engaging to act kindly towards him and never misuse him in possessions or body.[1]

The plot was at an end. Only these two, of all the conspirators, remained. The Chancellor died in 1596. Huntly was ruined, Lochnell, John Oig, MacEllar, were all dead. The young Argyll was a man, and such a man, guileful and dangerous, as there was no temptation to attack.

The plot was at an end; but it had left behind it a legacy of heartburning and

[1] Pitcairn, vol. i., pp. 391-2, and Birrell's Diary for 2nd March 1596; *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 251.

suspicion. Earl Archibald did not know the whole truth, but he still suspected Ardkinlas, and meant to make him pay for what he had done. He had other scores to settle too. And what likelier instrument could he find for his purposes than that which had always been used for such matters—the Clan Gregor?

So Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, the outlawed chief of an outlawed clan, found a new patron ready to make use of his services.

CHAPTER V

THE GENERAL BAND

Sir, we be outlaws of the forest,
Certayn withouten lease,
And hither we be come to our king,
To get us a charter of peace.

ADAM BELL.

I

THE Clan Gregor had come off more lightly than might have been expected after the murder of Drummond-Ernoch; but the Chief had learnt a lesson that he did not forget. In the twelvemonth that had passed before Calder came to his help, when Black Duncan's hounds hunted his people through the glens, the disastrous results of his recklessness came home to him in their full force. It was here that Alasdair MacGregor differed from his forefathers: earlier chiefs had been content to laugh at the law, and take their punishment when it came with defiance; and so they had plunged the clan deeper and deeper into a morass of danger and difficulty, from which its escape was becoming ever more doubtful.

Alastair had been at first no wiser than

they; but he was capable of learning from his experience. His main preoccupation now was how to rescue his people from the consequences of his own mad defiance. The gentlemen of the clan—Duncan Ladasach's grandsons, his own reckless young cousins, and the rest—could take care of themselves; but his ignorant helpless clansmen, "puir innocent men and young bairns," as he called them, had no one to look to but himself.

It was no easy task that he undertook. The events that followed the death of Drummond-Ernoch were of such a character as the government could not easily forget. MacGregor had got a bad name that he could not live down. Strive as he might to keep the peace, he and his men remained always "the wicked Clan Gregor, wha has sae lang continuit in bluid, theft, reif, and oppression."[1]

The murder had indeed been pardoned; but the pardon had been granted, it seems, as a favour to Calder, and now that Calder was out of the way, there was some disposition to regard it as insufficient, and it was hinted that Alasdair might yet be called to account for the blood-guilt that he had voluntarily taken on his own head.

The Stewarts of Ardvoirlich had never allowed the pardon to interfere with their

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., p. 215.

desire for vengeance, and intermittent fighting still went on between them and the MacGregors of Balquhidder. In 1593 the government made this the excuse to issue new Letters of Fire and Sword against the clan. The Earl of Argyll was ordered to enforce them; he was preoccupied with his quarrel with Huntly, and did very little. But similar Letters were sold by the government to Galbraith of Culcreuch and the Buchanans, and it seemed as if a fresh period of persecution was beginning.

Alasdair had lost his best friend in Calder, but he was not entirely alone. In 1591, during his outlawry, he had signed a Bond of Manrent with Aulay MacAulay of Ardincaple, a gentleman of the Lennox. These MacAulays were an offshoot of Clan Gregor, but had acquired a status of their own. Aulay MacAulay was a very respectable person, a tenant of the Duke of Lennox and high in his favour. The tie of kinship was strong, however; Aulay chose this unpropitious moment to acknowledge Alasdair MacGregor as his chief and promise him his *calp;* while Alasdair, on his side, engaged to "fortify, maintain, and assist the said Aulay MacAulay, his kin and friends, in all their honest actions against whatsoever person or persons, the King's Majesty being only excepted."

MacAulay now came effectively to his

friend's assistance. He complained to the Privy Council that Galbraith and Buchanan, far from intending "onything agains the Clan Gregor," had asked for the Letters of Fire and Sword out of malice towards Aulay himself and his neighbour Colquhoun of Luss, "and under colour of searching and seeking for the Clan Gregor, to assiege their houses and raise fire therein; whereof he (Galbraith) has already given a sufficient proof, by the convocating of the hale name of Buchanan for the maist part in arms, with whom the said (MacAulay) stands under deidly feud." And they had, Aulay continued, pursued and nearly slain him, and cut down two of his men and left them for dead. Aulay virtuously protested his complete innocence of any dealings with the MacGregors. The government, of course, did not know of his bond with Glenstrae; but, though they accepted his protest and cancelled the Letters of Fire and Sword, they were suspicious enough to take securities of him at the same time, not to reset the Clan Gregor.[1]

This trouble was safely weathered, thanks to MacAulay. But now difficulties of a different sort began to threaten.

[1] *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., pp. 156, 166 f.; *R.P.C.*, vol. v., pp. 41, 74, 734.

II

The King was now going on for thirty, and his real capacity, his cunning and persistence, were beginning to have full play. When Thirlestane died, the Chancellorship was left vacant. James, though he regretted his friend and wrote an epitaph for him in uncommonly bad verse, resolved not to put anyone in his place. He would be his own Chancellor; he would have no more great men about him, he said, "but such as are hangable."

The first task he undertook was to put down the chronic disorder in the country. Other Scottish kings before him had tried their hands at this. Young, proud, and brilliant, they had grappled with the dragon; and death had come, and snatched them away to an early grave, and their work was as though it had never been. It was reserved for James the Sixth — feeble, lame, cowardly, greedy, pompous, absurd; the persecutor of witches; the "dear Dad and Gossip" of Buckingham; the man who shook at the sight of bared steel —it was reserved for him to break the Borders and to tame the wild Highlands.

James's methods were like himself, mean and even ridiculous; but they were, like himself, successful. To set a thief to catch a thief; to force two hostile lairds to shake hands in

his presence; to take legal securities from those who cared nothing for law: to temporise with the strong and savagely punish the weak; to hang one man and make another Lord Warden for the same crime—it was all very absurd, but it was effective. This, and the fervour of religious feeling that turned men's passions into a new channel, put an end to the age of feud and foray.

The King had always hated disorder, and had already taken some steps to enforce peace. In 1587 the Scottish Parliament had passed the important Act known as the General Band. It had not as yet been made effective, but now James began to carry out its provisions.

The General Band made theft committed by landed men an act of high treason. It enacted that all landlords of the Borders and Highlands must find surety for the good behaviour of their followers and dependants. If any of these were accused of crime, the landlord must either produce him to answer the charge, or pay the damages himself. Nobody would willingly make themselves responsible for broken men, so they were declared to be followers of the proprietor on whose lands they were at the moment living, and he must either evict them or accept the responsibility. Chiefs of disorderly clans were to give hostages for

the good behaviour of themselves and their people.[1]

A roll of the names of the Highland and Border landlords was appended to this Act. It included the chiefs of almost every clan in the Highlands — even that notorious thief, MacFarlane of the Arrochar, appeared there. But it included none of the name of MacGregor: they had no landlord to represent them—one and all, great and small, they were broken men. They did appear, however, in the second list which followed—that of clans which "has Captains, Chiefs, and Chieftains whom on they depend, ofttimes agains the will of their landlords."

It was not until well on in the nineties that this Act began to be made really effective; not, in fact, until the Chancellor died and the King took things into his own hands. At first the landlords hardly knew what to make of it, when they found complaints promptly attended to, and themselves reprimanded and fined if they failed to produce their followers in answer to a summons. It is very doubtful how many of the fines were paid; but failure to pay now brought its own disadvantages. The defaulter was put to the horn, and, unless he were a very great man indeed, he must keep away from Edinburgh and the court or he would be gaoled.

[1] *Acts of Parliament of Scotland*, vol. iii., p. 461 ff.

The new regime proved very trying to the MacGregors. The landlords soon found they had their hands full with their own clans, and would not make themselves responsible for broken men also. They began again to evict their MacGregor tenants. Even the long-suffering Menzies turned against them, and applied for a writ to eject "Alexander MacGregor of Glenstrae, pretendit tenant and occupier of the 32-merkland of Rannoch."

Black Duncan was in a particularly annoying situation. He, as the unwilling landlord of Alasdair, was technically responsible for all the misdeeds of his bitterest enemy, and one would think Alasdair must have been sorely tempted to take to cattle-raiding again, just for the pleasure of seeing Glenorchy pay up the damages. All Sir Duncan's efforts to evict Alasdair were in vain, and he was driven to complain to the Privy Council. He declared he ought not to be held responsible for the MacGregor, who was actually at the horn for not removing "fra the said Sir Duncan's lands of Stronmelochan and their pertinents, and because he remainit at the said process of horn as he does yet unrelaxt, and in the meantime still possessit and occupiet the said Sir Duncan's lands by violence agains his will, as he does yet notwithstanding that (Sir Duncan) by his proceedings agains the said

(Alasdair) has followit out the order proscrivit by the (General Band) made anent the removing of broken men fra lands wha are not answerable." Black Duncan was accordingly acquitted of all responsibility.[1]

With all these processes out against him—outlawed three deep, as it were — Alasdair MacGregor must have felt himself getting steadily deeper into the bog. The most obvious way out was the old one of getting some great man to be his patron—someone who would acknowledge him and his people and answer for them to the government. But this was not so easy. Calder was gone, and no one else wanted to shoulder the responsibility of restraining "the wicked Clan Gregor."

There was only one to whom he might have turned; he was sure of a ready welcome from the Earl of Argyll. That house had usually been friendly to the MacGregors, and Earl Archibald was the ward and pupil of Calder. Private messages, sent through mutual friends, had already made Alasdair aware that an appeal from him would not be ignored. But there was a price to be paid for the Earl's friendship, and Macgregor was not ready to pay it.

Argyll was ready to take the clan under his

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., pp. 241-2; *R.P.C.*, vol. v., p. 213.

strong protection, but it was to be on the old terms. He wanted a band of hired bravos, whom he might use to prosecute the private feuds, which he did not care to pursue openly. One of these was with Ardkinlas, and one was with Aulay MacAulay.

The lordship of Argyll now reached to Loch Long, and the Earl was eager to extend his influence over the Lennox—the district which embraces the shores of Loch Lomond. The Duke of Lennox naturally resented this. The two great men, too, both claimed the office of Admiral of the Western Seas. This included the right to collect the excise duty on herring, a profitable matter. Lennox had the better right to it; but meantime Argyll's followers with his tacit connivance, harried the fishers and attacked the Duke's officers when they collected the tax. Aulay MacAulay, as one of Lennox's followers, had drawn on himself the enmity of Argyll.[1]

Alasdair MacGregor knew that the first condition to the Earl's favour was that he must undertake his feud with Ardkinlas and with MacAulay, and this he would not do. Ardkinlas was his kinsman, "the man I did maist trust into," as he said. Aulay MacAulay had acknowledged him as his chief when he was a hunted outlaw, under sentence of

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. v., p. 298; vol. vi., pp. 111, 345, 177-8.

death, and he would not throw him over now.

There was, however, more than personal loyalty and affection to hold him back. He was not blind to what was going on around him. He understood that the times were changing, and the old plan of selling his sword for the protection of some great man, as his forefathers had often done, could only lead to further disaster now. But what was he to do? Some standing-ground he must have. He determined on a daring step to save himself and his people. He would make his own offers to the government. He would throw himself on the protection of a greater even than Argyll—he would go to the King himself.

III

It was in 1596 that Alasdair took this desperate resolution: for so it must have seemed to him. Probably two hundred years at least had passed since any MacGregor chief had appeared at court. He had no reason to expect a favourable reception. He had been for years past at the horn, and the King had recently demanded returns of all persons permanently at the horn throughout the kingdom, in order to take strong measures against them. He was not certain if his pardon

for the murder of Drummond-Ernoch would hold good. Sixty years since, Johnny Armstrong the Border chieftain had ridden to meet King James the Fifth on a safe-conduct, and had been hanged in despite of it. Perhaps he would get such a welcome as Johnny did:

"Awa', awa', thou traitor strang;
Out of my sight soon mayest thou be;
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee."

"To seek het water beneath cauld ice,
Surely it is a great folly;
I have asked grace at a graceless face,
But there is nane for my men and me."

It was the month of July, and the King was holding his council at Dunfermline. There, we read, appeared in their presence Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, "in maist humble manner, acknowledging his offences and disobedience bypast, whereof he maist earnestly repentit," and pledged himself, as chief, that he and his clan would keep good rule in the country, and be answerable to His Majesty and to justice. It was decided that Alasdair should remain himself as hostage; but he was not to remain in ward. He was to be in His Majesty's company and house, and not to depart without the King's license and letter; and thereupon he swore his oath to be faithful as "the King's

household-man," and "as he suld answer to God upon the salvation of his saul."

Immediately afterwards a new pardon was issued to Alasdair and all his followers, formally acquitting them of all guilt of the murder of Drummond-Ernoch, and "for all other (crimes) committed by the said Alexander or by any other of his surname of MacGregor."[1]

The sweeping terms of the pardon, and the sudden transformation of the outlaw into the King's household-man, suggest that Alasdair had found favour in the eyes of "Gentle King Jamie." That monarch was always very amenable to personal influence, and was apt to take strong, if transitory, likings. No doubt he felt flattered at having succeeded in taming the chief of the indomitable Clan Gregor, and enjoyed showing off his captive Orson to his courtiers, and this made him lenient. The two men were very much of an age, and they had one taste in common; the King was passionately fond of hunting, and Alasdair, we know, was a skilled bowman and arrow-maker.

The wild Highland chief, who had never seen a town and could not read or write, must have felt strange enough at the court of the pedantic James. The little northern court, half barbarous, half scholarly, must have seemed

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. v., p. 741; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 247.

very wonderful to him; though no doubt, with a Highlander's customary pride, he hid his amazement and haughtily implied that he had as good again at home. What he thought, or how it ended, we cannot tell; all we know is that by 1597 he was back in the Highlands. Perhaps the King grew tired of his fancy, and dismissed him. Perhaps, finding the restraint of court life unbearable, he took French leave and fled. At any rate, there is no further indication in Alasdair's story that he kept the royal favour.

His venture, which had at first seemed so successful, had in reality effected very little. The good impression made on the King's mind by the personal meeting disappeared. Instead, he seemed to regard the MacGregors with a growing hostility. Alasdair, on his side, soon found that he had undertaken more than he could fulfil.

He had to find caution under the General Band for the good behaviour of himself and his men, and he could not get it. 10,000 merks, or even 20,000, was often demanded, and he had not so much in the world and so could not be his own cautioner. Nor could he induce any of his neighbours to risk such a sum for him. Some of his men he managed to settle under other landlords, but for the great mass of them he was responsible himself. Nobody would

take over the more lawless ones. There was, for example, John Galt MacGregor, a mere professional thief; of all his exploits Alasdair must bear the burden. Moreover, he had pledged himself for the good behaviour of his men, and he found he could not keep them in order.

Even while he was making his peace at the King's court, some of them had been at their old games. They had thieved from Glenorchy; and he, quick to take advantage, denounced Alasdair at the sheriff court of Perth for having broken the contract made at Kilchurn in 1592, and had him put to the horn again—he was outlawed afresh, after a short six months of respectability.[1]

Such persons as John Galt were not under his control at all; but the gentlemen of the clan were almost equally difficult to manage. Some of them ought to have been surrendered as hostages under the General Band, but it was impossible to get them to see the necessity of this. Alasdair's influence might keep them from bloodshed, but he could not keep them from cattle-raiding; it was a part of their lives. His own brother, Ian Dubh, was the worst of them, and was, of course, the most difficult to control. He was the Tanister of Clan Gregor —the heir presumptive. He had married the

[1] Clan Campbell Collection, Perth Register, p. 46.

daughter of Murray of Strowan and settled down in Balquhidder, at Stronvar on Loch Voil. It seemed likely that his little son would one day be chief, for Alasdair had no son. There is no record, indeed, that Alasdair ever married. The *Black Book of Taymouth* says that he "left nocht bot ane daughter," but I am inclined to think this daughter was illegitimate. After the death of the two Glenstrae brothers, the government took measures for the safe upbringing of Ian Dubh's three sons, and it is only reasonable to suppose that they would have done the same in regard to any legitimate child left by the chief.

Ian, then, was an important person and beyond his brother's control. He had made his own agreement with the Earl of Argyll, and he was not at all above lifting a drove of cattle in Strathbraan or plundering a taksman on Loch Tay side.

The other Black John, the son of Ewin the Tutor, was as wild as his cousin, and the two uncles, Duncan of the Glen and Alasdair Galt, were by no means beyond reproach.

With every disadvantage, Alasdair contrived to hold his men back from any desperate outrage, such as had been common in the days of Duncan Ladasach and of his own father. A search made through the Register of the

Privy Council and Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials* reveals the surprising fact that during the whole period 1592-1602, very little serious crime, and no case of bloodshed or manslaughter, was brought up against the Clan Gregor.

Comparing their record, not merely with that of the other Highland clans but with that of many Lowland families, the MacGregors at this time appear as rather quiet and law-abiding citizens.

We need not refer to the Lewis, where something like civil war was raging between the two rival chiefs of the MacLeods: or to the north, where Caithness and Sutherland were continually at daggers drawn. One instance from the Lowlands may suffice for comparison. At the very moment when Alasdair MacGregor was trying to make his peace with the government, the great feud between the Maxwells and the Johnstones in Dumfriesshire had come to a crisis. The Johnstones had conducted a raid, which led to the killing of fifteen men. Maxwell, the Lord Warden of the West March, was ordered to call them to account. He marched against them; the Johnstone met him and fought a pitched battle. He actually offered a reward for Maxwell's head, and paid it. He won a complete victory. The government found no better means of punishing the

successful rebel than to make him Warden in Maxwell's place.

Compared with this, the record of MacGregor crimes seems petty indeed. Cattle-raiding went on, but on a small scale; here three cows and two oxen, here five horses, there six cows, and so forth. Sometimes there was a bigger affair — sixteen horses, twelve cattle—and then the leader was usually one or other of the namesakes, Ian Dubh nan Lurach or Ian Dubh MacEwin; but such things were everyday matters in the Highlands.

Yet, while great men like the Johnstone, or Lord Cassilis, or the Master of Ogilvy, got off scot-free for far worse offences, the unlucky chief of Clan Gregor was continually denounced for his lawless misdoings. He had no friends and no one to speak for him. He was dogged by the bad reputation he had won in the beginning. It was assumed, without much investigation, that he was always to blame.

In 1598 he gave a singular proof of his honest desire to keep the peace. A band of wild MacLeans from Mull raided his lands in Rannoch, stripping bare his poor sub-tenants there. Instead of retaliating in the usual fashion, Alasdair took the case to the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh. It was an unheard-of step, and his own men probably regarded it as a piece of disgraceful

pusillanimity. His advocate alleged in court that it was the first time a laird of MacGregor had "come and sought justice . . . sin King James I." He won his case, and MacLean of Duart was ordered to pay damages; but as Duart in Mull could afford to laugh at decrees of the courts in Edinburgh, little was gained. The harried MacGregors were driven to theft again to save themselves from starvation, and no doubt they muttered behind their chief's back that this was all they got by going to law! and that the old ways were better!

But, *hawks dinna pyke out hawks' een:* what had brought MacLean of Duart plundering in the Braes of Rannoch, when he could have got a better booty a few miles off, in Breadalbane or Athol? Alasdair knew who it was that had done him this ill turn.

IV

Archibald, Earl of Argyll, was now two-and-twenty years old. Gillespie Gruamach, they called him—Archibald the Grim. The boy who had grown up in the atmosphere of bloodshed and treachery that has been described was himself treacherous and cruel, revengeful, cold-hearted, and covetous. Foreseeing he was, and cunning to lay traps for the feet of his enemies; well able to put a blithe face on a black heart.

In later days, time had its revenge on Earl Archibald. He was converted to the Roman Catholic faith, and for this he sacrificed lands and titles and all that he had won by the sale of his own honour and men's lives, and fled abroad. Then the hatred that he had roused among his countrymen found vent in some bitter punning lines:

> Now Earl of *Guile* and Lord *Forlorn* thou goes,
> Quitting thy Prince, to serve his Spanish foes;
> No faith in plaids, no trust in Highland trews—
> *Cameleon*-like, they change so many hues.

Archibald the Grim had all the Campbell passion for land-grabbing, and greatly extended the dominions of his house. There was neither truth nor pity in the man. He secretly stirred up his neighbours against one another; he made mischief persistently; and when he had set the heather in a blaze, he offered his services to the government, got Letters of Fire and Sword, and quenched in blood the flame he had himself kindled. By such dealings he acquired Kintyre, Islay, and Ardnamurchan, driving out the MacLeans and MacDonalds, and setting cadets of his own house in their place.

To such a man the services of the Clan Gregor would have been invaluable; but Alasdair MacGregor had rejected his offers

and, by his bold step in approaching the King, he had struck a direct blow at Argyll's influence in the Highlands. For the Earl's plans, nothing could be worse than that the rebellious little chiefs should repent and reform, and submit themselves to the law. It was by fishing in drumlie waters that he expected to make his profit.

Earl Archibald never forgot and never forgave; and Alasdair began to find it out as soon as he returned to the Highlands. He had defied the Earl, and the Earl replied by hounding out the MacLeans against him.

"Sin I was first his Majesty's man," said Alasdair, "I never could be at ane ease, by my lord of Argyll's falseheid and inventions; for he causit MacLean and (Clan Cameron) to commit hership and slaughter in my rowme of Rannoch, the whilk causit my puir men thereafter to beg and steal."[1]

Nevertheless he continued to struggle on in the way he had chosen. In 1599 he was summoned to appear before the Privy Council to answer for his "mischievous clan," and at last succeeded in making what looked like a working arrangement. His neighbours were beginning to realise in what a hopeless position the man stood, unable either to be his own

[1] Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 434.

caution or to find others to act for him. Sir John Murray of Tullibardine, one of whose clanswomen had married Ian Dhu, showed himself friendly. Alasdair proposed his plans, and Tullibardine, with Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy and the Commendator of Inchaffray, laid them before the Privy Council.

"Because," they said, "it is impossible to the said Alasdair to find inland caution upon the conditions of the General Band . . . in respect neither is he responsall in the sums whereupon the caution is founden, and that nae inland man will be caution for him in respect of the bypast enormities of his clan, therefore it is offerit that the said Alasdair, for satisfaction of his Majesty's honour, sall come in his Highness's will[1] for ony offence committit by himself, and that he sall deliver to his Majesty three pledges . . . to be namit by his Majesty out of the three houses of that clan . . . John Dubh MacGregor being always exceptit, to be placit where his Majesty and Council sall appoint, to remain as pledges for the guid rule and obedience of the hale clan and name of MacGregor; and for such of the said clan as be inobedient, he sall either enter them to his Highness or his Justice, or else

[1] "To come in his Highness's will" meant that he agreed that the King should decide what his punishment was to be, without trial in a court of law.

use justice on them himself, he having his Majesty's commission to that effect."

The Council accepted the offers. Alasdair himself appeared before them, and swore to be responsible for all the men of his clan that he could not place under other landlords; and then Tullibardine and Inchaffray declared that this having been arranged, they were now willing to be his cautioners.

They also swore to produce him and one of the hostages before the Council upon 4th September. Accordingly on that date the two cautioners did appear, and handed over Ian Dubh MacEwin; but Alasdair himself did not come. He was, his sureties alleged, "visite with infirmity and sickness, sae that he was not able to travel." His appearance was therefore excused until November, and then again postponed to January 1600.

So far all seemed well; but when the 29th of January, the day appointed, arrived, Alasdair still absented himself; and moreover, neither Tullibardine nor Inchaffray nor Ian Dubh MacEwin appeared. The Council lost patience; they fined the two cautioners each 10,000 merks for not producing Alasdair, and another 5000 for not producing the hostage, and they indignantly denounced Glenstrae as having "maist undutifully and unhonestly violated his promise," and declared that the King

would prosecute him and his people "with all rigour and extremity."

It is to be feared that Alasdair's sudden indisposition had been invented to suit the occasion. Tullibardine knew it; he said mysteriously that the chief's failure to keep his engagement was due to "some occasions whilk intervenit and fell out before the day of his entry, whilks discourageit and terrifiet him to keep the first diet." The truth was that in the interval Alasdair had been again approached by the Earl of Argyll, who had told him that the government were playing him false. "I made my moyan to please his Majesty and Lords of Council, baith of service and obedience, both to punish faltours and to safe innocent men," said Glenstrae later, "And when Argyll was made foreseen thereof, he entisit me to stay and start frae thae conditions, causing me to understand that I was deceivit; but with fair words to put me in ane snare, . . . began to put at me and my kin."

The Council's decision, however, alarmed the cautioners. Presumably they sent to Alasdair, pointing out that they would be 15,000 merks out of pocket by his failure, and encouraging him with promises of protection. At any rate, the news had had barely time to reach the Highlands, when Tullibardine

turned up in Edinburgh with Alasdair in his company, full of excuses and protestations. He was pardoned and relieved of his fine, and Alasdair was thrown into gaol for breaking his promise.[1]

For the next fortnight he remained "in ward in the Castle of Edinburgh," while the Council sent to summon all the various landlords, on whose estates the Clan Gregor was settled, to a conference. What did he think of in those days? Did he look from some barred window down on the little town below, which seemed to him so grand and stately, and think what rare plunder there would be for his hungry clan if he could turn them loose there, and how "E'en do and spare nocht" would ring along the narrow streets? Or did he look across the Forth valley, where on clear days he could see his own Highland hills like clouds along the sky-line, and grow homesick, in the raw winds of an Edinburgh spring, for the mild dewy airs of Loch Awe, and long to be hunting again in the Corries of Cruachan?

> My hounds may a' rin masterless,
> My hawks may fly frae tree to tree,
> My lord may grip my vassal lands,
> For there again I maunna be.

---

[1] *Archæologia Scotica*, pp. 151-52; *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 20, 72-3, 78, 81; Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 434.

Or perhaps he looked southward, across the borough-muir with its grazing cattle and ancient oaks thin-strewn, across the rich Lothians, with their corn lands and woods and fair houses with proud names and tragic stories; and wished that his own lines had been cast in such a secure and lovely land. And he wondered, maybe, why fate had given him such a ravelled clue to wind, and what ill-luck was at his heels that for all his striving to do better he found himself ever deeper and deeper in danger, puzzling over it blindly till his unpractised brain was weary; for what could a man do without friends or land or luck?

On the 6th of March the landlords of the Clan Gregor had collected, and Alasdair was brought before the Privy Council and confronted with them. An odd scene of recrimination and disorder took place. The landlords complained that the main cause of "the misrule and disobedience of that Clan (Clan Gregor) and the inability of the landlords to make them answerable" was "the reset and comfort whilk they fand of their said chief and amangs the landlords themselves, seeing that every ane of them for the maist part reset the men and tenants of others, when they were pursuit by their maisters or when they had committit ony wicked or evil deeds."

A flood of light seems cast on dark places here. . . . One would like to have been present at that scene before the Council, all the great men — Atholl, Argyll, Glenorchy, Menzies, Tullibardine—bandying accusations back and forth, with the MacGregor in the midst, prudently keeping his mouth shut on many tales he could have told of secret encouragement, watching the angry faces to see which way things would go.

In the end it was decided to revert to the arrangement that had been made last autumn. Each landlord was to take over as many MacGregor tenants as he was willing to; Glenstrae was to be responsible for the rest; and he was to be detained in Edinburgh until the three hostages should be delivered to the government.

He did not return to the Castle, however. Tullibardine good-naturedly asked that he should be released on parole, promising to keep him in his own company until the 27th of March, and on that day either to restore him to the authorities, or to produce the hostages. There was, however, little difficulty in securing the pledges now. When it was a question of ransoming their chief's body, the MacGregors did not hold back. By the beginning of April, three gentlemen of the

clan had surrendered themselves, and Alasdair was free to return to Glenstrae.[1]

He had settled with the government; but he had not yet settled with the Earl of Argyll.

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 89, 101, 639.

CHAPTER VI

THE RAID OF GLENFRUIN

Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid,
And I wot they had better have stayed at hame.
JOCK O' THE SIDE.

I

THE Earl of Argyll, though he had failed to win over the Clan Gregor to his purposes, had not neglected to pay off old scores.

John Campbell of Ardkinlas still went in deadly fear of his chief's vengeance. He had been released by the government in 1596, but he had not dared to return home. A band of Campbells, some of them personal servants of Argyll, led by a bastard son of Calder, had attacked his house, frightened and insulted his wife, and robbed and beaten his servants. Then the Earl seized his lands and, as the poor wretch complained to the Privy Council, "violently debarrit him therefra." And, cruellest cut of all, he moved the Council to order Ardkinlas to find caution under the General Band for 10,000 merks. Ardkinlas "violently debarrit" from his estates, could by no means procure the caution, and he complained that

"nor yet of equity aught he to be compellit thereto," because all his men were sub-tenants of Argyll, and the Earl was the proper person to answer for them.[1]

Aulay MacAulay of Ardincaple, too, had no reason to complain of the dullness of life. He had several times already escaped assassination by the skin of his teeth. He had evicted from his lands a Campbell tenant, and this was made the pretext for a series of attacks on him by the clan. Duncan Campbell, the Captain of Carrick, Neil Campbell of Lochgoilhead—who had the suggestive by-name of Neil the Traitor—with several other gentlemen of the name, made raid after raid on his lands. They burnt his houses and plundered his tenants, and wounded and kidnapped his servants. Twice they lay in wait with intent to murder him, and on one occasion their emissaries fired through the window of his lodgings in Greenock, killing one of his men and shooting Aulay himself through the body.

These attacks were undoubtedly made with the approval of Argyll: in one case the plans were made and the muster set at his house of Roseneath. He had recently signed a bond acknowledging the guilty parties as "his proper men and servants," and owning his obligation under the General Band to "make

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. v., pp. 322, 407.

them answerable to justice;" but he made no attempt to bring them to book for what they had done.[1]

All the same it was very unpleasant for Argyll to have to employ his own clansmen for such purposes as these. It would have been much easier to use Glenstrae, for then his own connection with the affair would not be suspected —it would all be put down to MacGregor lawlessness. It was such a simple matter—an armed attack on the house of Ardincaple, in which Aulay should unfortunately perish; a raid on Ardkinlas or on the rich Lennox, where there would be a handsome booty for Alasdair's greedy gleds to carry off—surely that was a small thing when it was to oblige the great man? The Earl could make great promises in return: he was the lord of all the South-west Highlands, the Justiciar of Scotland. Under his protection the outlaws would have nothing to fear.

"He did all his crafty diligence," says Alasdair, "to entice me to slay and destroy the laird Ardincaple, MacAulay, for ony gains, kindness or friendship that he might do or give me. The whilk I did refuse in respect of my faithful promise made to MacAulay of-before. Also, he did all the diligence he could, to move me to slay the laird of Ardkinlas, in like manner;

[1] *K.P.C.*, vol. v., p. 743; vol. vi., pp. 69, 70, 111, 178, 183.

but I never grantit thereto; through the whilk he did envy me grettumly."[1]

At the same time Glenstrae found himself unable to keep his faith with the government. Autumn came, and three new hostages should have been surrendered to take the place of those handed over in spring; but again no one would go. It was all very well to give themselves up to ransom their chief; but one of their fellow-clansmen was a different matter.

So, in March 1601, we find the Privy Council launching into a furious denunciation of the MacGregor chief. He had not fulfilled his engagements; he was again at the horn for his failure, having yielded to "the perverse counsel and inclination of his wicked and misrulit clan," and clearly showed that he meant to "owersee and wink at the insolences and attempts of the disorderit thieves and limmers for whom he ought to answer." He had given no pledges at all for the second quarter, and only two of the three that had been promised for last year.

There is something strange here. In the first place, though the Council referred to "insolences and attempts" of the MacGregors, there is no record to be found anywhere of any fresh outrage on the part of the clan. Since last year, the only charges brought against them

[1] Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 435.

were two of petty theft, in one of which several other persons besides one individual MacGregor were involved. In the second place, there is an unaccountable discrepancy about the hostages. When they were first handed over, in April 1600, it is expressly stated in the minutes of the Council that all three were to hand—John MacIanduy and Ewin MacAlasdair Pudrach being in the custody of Murray of Tullibardine, and John MacPatrick VicIan in that of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy; and the Council declared that they were satisfied. Yet nine months later they state that the third pledge was never delivered. Is it possible that Black Duncan, with the deliberate object of getting his old enemy into trouble, had never handed over John MacPatrick to the Council?[1]

At any rate it is clear that someone had been maligning the Clan Gregor to the government, and who this was may be easily guessed. The Council, having expressed their disapproval of Alasdair and all his wicked ways, went on to pass an extraordinary measure. The King, being eager to have "the said insolent limmers repressit and reducit to obedience," appointed Archibald Earl of Argyll, of whose "guid inclination" he was satisfied, to be his lieutenant for the purpose. Argyll was present at the meeting, and was sworn in as a Privy

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 101, 184, 215, 416.

Councillor; and then he received his commission. He was to have power to summon the Clan Gregor before him, under pain of horning, and take sureties of them. If any of them failed to appear, he was to "prosecute them as fugitives and outlaws with fire and sword, and to burn their houses, and to follow and pursue them wherever they shall flee . . . and to raise fire and use all force and engine which can be had" for their capture. He had also authority to summon their landlords to produce them under the General Band, and to hold justice-courts to try them whenever he should think it expedient. Anyone who reset a MacGregor or his wife and children was to be considered guilty of all the bygone or future offences of the clan. And in order that the execution of the commission might be more effective, the Crown was to have no power to interfere with Argyll's decisions or to grant mercy to those whom he might condemn.[1]

The last clause was surely unparalleled in State documents. Not only were the lives and property of the MacGregors placed absolutely at the disposal of the Earl of Argyll, but the King voluntarily surrendered his royal prerogative of pardon.

The commission was made retrospective, and the Earl was to have power to redress all

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., p. 216.

complaints made against the Clan Gregor since 1596. He lost no time in carrying out his instructions. He held his first justice-court at Stirling on the 22nd of April 1601, and Alasdair MacGregor appeared before him there, and again undertook, to this new master, the obligations he had before acknowledged to the Privy Council. Once more he agreed to answer for his men's doings, to surrender hostages, and to keep good rule, under pain of "the loss of his lands to the said Earl for ever." He himself, or his brother Ian, was to remain in ward with the Earl until he paid up all damages due to any person injured by his men, whose claims were presented before 12th May next. Alasdair signed the agreement, "with my hand touching the notary's pen underwritten, because I cannot write," and six of his gentlemen signed after him. The rest of the clan were to be required to sign also, but apparently they fought shy of it.[1]

This was all very fine; but the arrangement seems to have been made only that the Earl might produce the documents before the Privy Council, and show them how nicely he had managed the Clan Gregor.

A number of complaints were brought forward from persons who hopefully believed that the Earl of Argyll would execute justice

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 402-4.

better than the King, but it was soon clear that he meant to do nothing whatever either to satisfy the complainants or to apprehend MacGregor criminals. He actually captured the thief, John Galt MacGregor, and let him go again without punishment. In truth Argyll cared not a straw for enforcing order in the Highlands. His real object was to get the Clan Gregor into his own power; and he had got what he wanted.

Black Duncan of Glenorchy fared the best. He had himself newly come from prison in Edinburgh where he had been forced to pay 40,000 merks, at the instance of some individuals whom he had injured, and who proved to be more influential than he had guessed. No doubt he was in a very bad temper; and he cannot have liked that clause in the new agreement, where Alasdair agreed that his lands should be forfeited to the Earl if he failed. He decided to take the law into his own hands, and make sure of the lands. He raided Stronmelochan, burnt the house, and at last drove the MacGregors out of Glenstrae. Probably there was little resistance, as the chief must have been still Argyll's prisoner. Black Duncan easily obtained a Precept of Remission from the government for the deed.[1]

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 274; *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 36.

The fate of the law-abiding persons who had trusted to the justice of Argyll was less happy. Finding nothing done, they began at last to complain to the Privy Council. The Earl was warned that he would be summoned on 3rd August 1602 to give account of his commission. The 3rd of August came, but the Earl of Argyll did not. Complaints were piling up steadily. The Council became impatient; he was denounced rebel—which in the case of such a great man was a mere formality—and fined the whole of his security of 20,000 merks —which apparently he did not pay. The Council recited his offences with great indignation; he had completely failed to restrain the MacGregors, who were "als insolent and of als unhappy and mischievous a disposition als they were at ony time preceding, and has committit open and avowit herships and depredations, upon fair day light." But they did not rescind the commission.[1]

This weakness on the part of the government seems extraordinary, the more so as they were steadily making their administration more effective in other affairs. The real reason was probably to be found across the Border. The old Queen of England was dying and she had not yet named her heir. Was it to be the King of Scots? With his mind fixed

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 441, 442, 489.

on a crown, his eyes straining to penetrate the hidden events in the south, it was small wonder that James cared little what was forward in the Braes of Rannoch, and that he was mainly concerned to have the troublesome Clan Gregor taken off his hands, and to avoid a quarrel with his most powerful baron.

In the meantime the Clan Gregor were happily making hay while the sun shone. *Change o' deils is lightsome:* they saw nothing of the dangers that threatened them. This, they thought, was a situation easy to understand; the great MacCailein More had taken them under his wing and given them a license to plunder, if so be they harried his enemies and let his friends alone. No longer might their chief hold them in leash and force upon them an incomplete and unwilling respect for the law; and with joyful hearts they betook themselves to their old games.

But the unhappy chief, who could see further than they did—what were his thoughts? All his years of striving to better the position of his people had gone for nothing. He was back where he was in 1592, only worse off, for the man who now held his fate in his hands was not the friendly Calder but the false and cold-hearted young Earl—Archibald the Grim.

We do not know how long he remained the Earl's prisoner after the meeting at Stirling,

but we can guess pretty certainly that he was not released until he had made his bargain with Argyll.

What was the use of struggling any longer? Everything was against him. His upbringing and instincts alike predisposed him to accept the Earl's offers: such a life of warfare and plunder must, after all, have been natural and congenial to him. And if he refused, what then? His own people would not support him; they had never been able to understand his efforts to bring them under the protection of the law, and now, when the law seemed to their childish intelligence to be on their side, now least of all could he restrain them. Argyll held both haft and blade, as the saying went, and he could expect no mercy if he defied him. Argyll had only to make use of the powers entrusted to him, and leave the wicked Clan Gregor to the judgment of the law. He could hang his prisoner out of hand, march against the clan and put them all to the sword, and no one could call him to account. Who would believe or care, if the outlawed chief of the MacGregors said, "The Earl of Argyll ordered me to break the law, and when I refused, he unjustly punished me?"

It could not be expected that Alasdair would hold out any longer, yet even now he did not surrender unconditionally. He still refused to

do anything against MacAulay or against Ardkinlas; but the Earl of Argyll had other enemies who were neither MacGregor's friends nor his kinsmen, and against these there was nothing now to hold him back.

Argyll was not pleased. There was a long account piling up at the door of the petty chieftain who had dared so obstinately to defy him; but the time had not yet come for a settlement. Alasdair might still be useful, and the Earl could afford to wait.

II

Half way up the west side of Loch Lomond the Luss water comes down its narrow glen, picking its way between steep slopes of green turf, hemmed in by wild hills. Luss village stands at its mouth, and looks away across the glimmering water to the peak of Ben Lomond. A group of wooded islets — Inch Tavvanach, Inch Moan, Inch Connachan — guard the approach to the point of Rossdhu, a mile or two below. Luss is neither of the Highlands nor the Lowlands, standing in the skirts of the hills, but open, by water, to the south, and only a few miles from the Lowland town of Dunbarton. Colquhoun of Luss lived in his castle at Rossdhu, a free baron, holding his lands not of the Duke of Lennox but of the

King, Heritable Coroner of Dunbartonshire, friend and patron of Dunbarton town, and exposed to continuous plundering from the wild clans in the north.

There was at present much ill-feeling between the Highlanders and the townsfolk of Dunbarton. One of the burgesses, George Smollett —his grandson many times removed was Tobias Smollett the novelist—had made a practice of intercepting and robbing Highlanders on their way down to the Lowland towns. It was not armed men that he interfered with, but poor folk and women who came down from the hills to pay their rents or to sell their goods in the markets of Glasgow and Renfrew. Smollett "did maisterfully reive their bestial and clothing and other wares," and, if they resisted, would "tak, apprehend, and imprison their persons, and sometimes pursue them by way of deid"—that is, to the death.[1] Smollett's conduct, in the eyes of the mountaineers, was not at all on the same standing as their own armed forays; there was nothing honourable about his exploits: "He that takes a cow from a poor widow is a thief. He that lifts a drove of cattle by moonlight is a gentleman drover."

Colquhoun by his connection with Dunbarton came in for part of this ill-will; but he had also

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. v., pp. 10, 87.

his own private feuds. One was with Buchanan of that Ilk. Another, and it was a much more serious matter, was with the Earl of Argyll. Earl Archibald's own territories marched with the Lennox, and he looked that way covetously. Colquhoun was obnoxious to him, partly by the mere fact of his independent status, partly because he was on friendly terms with MacAulay of Ardincaple and with the Duke of Lennox. But there was more to it than that: Colquhoun had been one of Huntly's well-wishers, and had signed a bond with him in 1592, and Argyll hated all those who had been more or less involved in the plot against himself and Moray.[1]

What had been, as yet, a more troublesome business to Colquhoun, was his quarrel with MacFarlane of the Arrochar. This chief, whose lands lay only a few miles off, about the head of Loch Long, was little more than a brigand. In 1592 he and his men raided Luss in force, fired the castle of Bannachra, killed Sir Humphry Colquhoun, the chief, and kidnapped his little daughter. Sir Humphry left no son, and as Luss was a male fief he was succeeded by his brother Alexander. His widow soon after married John Campbell of Ardkinlas, who also had been widowed by

[1] *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., p. 153; *Spalding Club Miscellany*, vol. iv., p. 247.

the death of his wife, Annas Campbell of Glenorchy.

As if all this were not enough, the Colquhouns were also at feud with the Clan Gregor. Some of these, indeed, are said to have joined the MacFarlanes in the raid on Bannachra.

The origin of the quarrel is traditional. Two wandering MacGregors, it is said, were returning from Glasgow Fair, and sought shelter for the night at a house near Luss, belonging to one of Colquhoun's tenants. They were churlishly refused—an unpardonable sin in the Highlands—and so they thought themselves quite within their rights when they quartered themselves in an empty shed near by, and took a sheep from the fold without asking leave. Unfortunately they chose the most marked beast in the flock—a black sheep with a white tail. Its absence was at once noted when the household rose in the morning, the parti-coloured fleece was discovered in their possession, and they were at once hanged as thieves. This was the beginning of a feud, which was so disastrous to both parties, that it passed into a proverb: "Woe worth the day when the black wether with the white tail was ever lambed."[1]

[1] Gordon, almost a contemporary, also blames the Colquhouns for provoking the feud, *Earldom of Sutherland*, p. 246.

III

These were hard times in Scotland. Since 1600 the harvests had been bad; there was dearth all over the country, and dearth in the Lowlands often meant famine in the Highlands. The winter of 1601-2 was one of the coldest ever known. In February the snow fell for ten days on end without intermission. The plague was in Fife and Renfrew.

Probably Alasdair MacGregor could not in any case have held his half-starved men; but Argyll, when he found that the chief still hung back, had turned to Ian Dubh and to Ian and Duncan, sons of Ewin the Tutor, and James, son of Duncan of the Glen, all wild young fellows who were ready enough to oblige him. They made raid after raid on the Lennox, leaving MacAulay alone as their chief desired, but committing "great reifs and herships" upon Colquhoun of Luss.

"He movit my brother and some of my friends," said Alasdair, "to commit baith hership and slaughter upon the laird of Luss. Also he persuadit myself, with message, to weir agains the laird of Buchanan, whilk I did refuse; for the whilk I was continually boastit that he (Argyll) would be my unfriend; and when I did refuse his desire in that point, he enticit me with other messengers . . . to

weir and trouble the laird of Luss; whilk I behovit to do for his false boutgaits."

MacAulay was a friend, Ardkinlas a kinsman, with Buchanan he had no quarrel; but what did Alasdair owe Colquhoun of Luss? Nothing but enmity. It must have seemed to him, with his training, almost a duty to "weir and trouble the laird of Luss." His men were already deep in the enterprise, and his sense and his friends told him he must beware of Argyll if he still refused. It was chance choice; either way now was fraught with danger.

Upon the 4th of June 1602, Glenstrae gathered his men for a descent on Luss. He took his brother Ian, his cousins, and some twenty of his men. They were reinforced by Neil Campbell the Traitor from Lochgoilhead, with a handful of his fellows. They came in broad daylight, in the most open fashion, and swept clean Glenmulchen, driving over 120 cattle. Colquhoun summoned the Earl of Argyll, as being responsible under the royal commission for the doings of the Clan Gregor; but the Privy Council coolly decided to ignore the commission on this occasion, and only summon him under the General Band for his own immediate followers. He was called on to produce Lochgoilhead and Duncan of the Glen, but the Council held that Colquhoun

had failed to show that any of the others were Argyll's men. Needless to say Argyll took no notice of the summons, and the Clan Gregor must have thought that it was now clear that the government dared not interfere with them.

Six months later Duncan MacEwin MacGregor led a new raid into the Lennox, with or without his chief's knowledge. It was a much more serious affair than the last. They broke into Glenfinlas, at the very gates of Rossdhu, and stripped it from end to end. Every beast was driven, the houses were broken into and all movable gear lifted, and the raiders went home with a noble booty: 300 cows, 400 sheep and goats, 100 horses. There had been no bloodshed at the first raid—perhaps it was better planned, or perhaps the chief kept a sharp eye on his men; but this time there was fighting. Many of the Colquhouns were wounded, and two, a servant of Luss and a weaver named Reid, were killed. The plunder was soon dispersed through the Highlands, the resetters being mainly at Strachur, Appin, Lochgoilhead and Ardkinlas —all Campbells but one. One would very much like to know if any of the gear found its way to the house of Ardkinlas himself, and whether his wife, when new spoons appeared on her table and home-sick cows lowed in her byres, recognised anything that had been

familiar to her when she was Sir Humphry Colquhoun's lady.[1]

Meanwhile grief and rage reigned in the Lennox. This new outrage was more than the usual Highland compliment, and Alexander Colquhoun, the laird, went for advice and sympathy to his friends in Dunbarton. He held a council there with the Captain of the Castle — which was a royal fortress — Semple of Fulwood, and Thomas Fallasdale, one of the burgesses. It was Fallasdale who suggested a plan—to appeal to the King personally, since the Privy Council had done nothing; and to do so in a manner that could not fail to strike his imagination and rouse his wrath.[2]

Colquhoun went off at once to Stirling—the raid was on the 7th December, and he reached Stirling on the 21st. He took with him a number of women of his own clan, the wives, mothers, and daughters of those who had been killed or wounded at Glenfinlas. Each woman carried with her the bloody shirt of her injured man: one can only guess what was done in the case of those cleanly wives who had washed the shirt before the chief's orders came. They rode on horseback, and each carried her "bluidy sark" on the point of a

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 507-8; *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., pp. 186-87.

[2] *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., pp. 188-89.

spear, and they must have made a brave show.

It was well known that King James could not bear to look on an unsheathed sword, and trembled at the sight of blood. The murder of Rizzio in Queen Mary's presence, it was said, had cast this shadow on the mind of her unborn child. Now the gruesome pageant which his loyal subjects of the Lennox had prepared for him did not fail of its effect. The King probably did not ask how many of the bloody shirts actually represented men killed, and took all the bearers for widows and orphans. "The Clan Gregor," says Gordon, "had none about the King to plead their cause, which proved hurtful to them." James fell into a passion of rage and horror, and in the heat of the moment granted a commission to Colquhoun, ordering him to proceed against the Clan Gregor at once with fire and sword. It will be remembered that the King by his own act had no authority to grant this commission, as long as the one he had granted to the Earl of Argyll was still in force.

Colquhoun lost no time. He called up his own clan, and what help he could. He had already composed his feud with the Buchanans by marrying a daughter of that house, and now they came to his aid. He could also count on

the townsmen of Dunbarton. The authorities there were all his friends, and on 8th January the fencible men were called out, and the bailies ordered to see that some were armed with hackbuts and the rest with "jack, spear, and steel-bonnet." In the end the laird of Luss is said to have mustered 300 horse and 500 footmen.[1]

So Colquhoun made him ready to punish the Clan Gregor. But there is a Scots proverb that says: *He that gaes for wool may chance to come hame shorn.* He did not yet understand what he had to reckon with.

IV

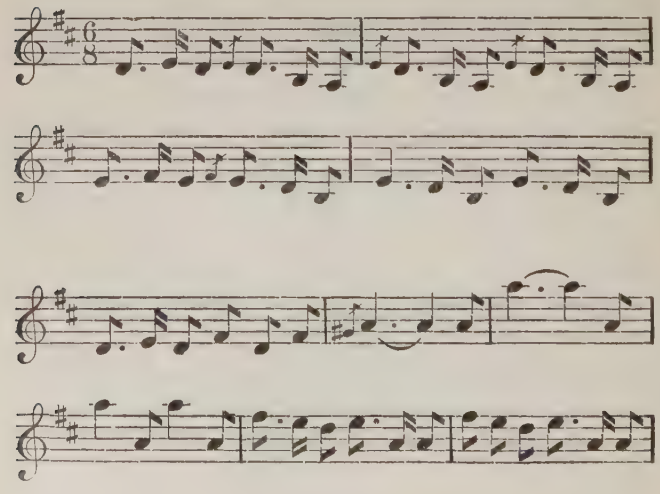
Alasdair MacGregor had speedy warning of what was preparing against him in the Lennox. Perhaps he knew that Colquhoun held the King's commission against him; but if so, it must have seemed to him a very different thing from the previous Letters of Fire and Sword issued against him and his people, for

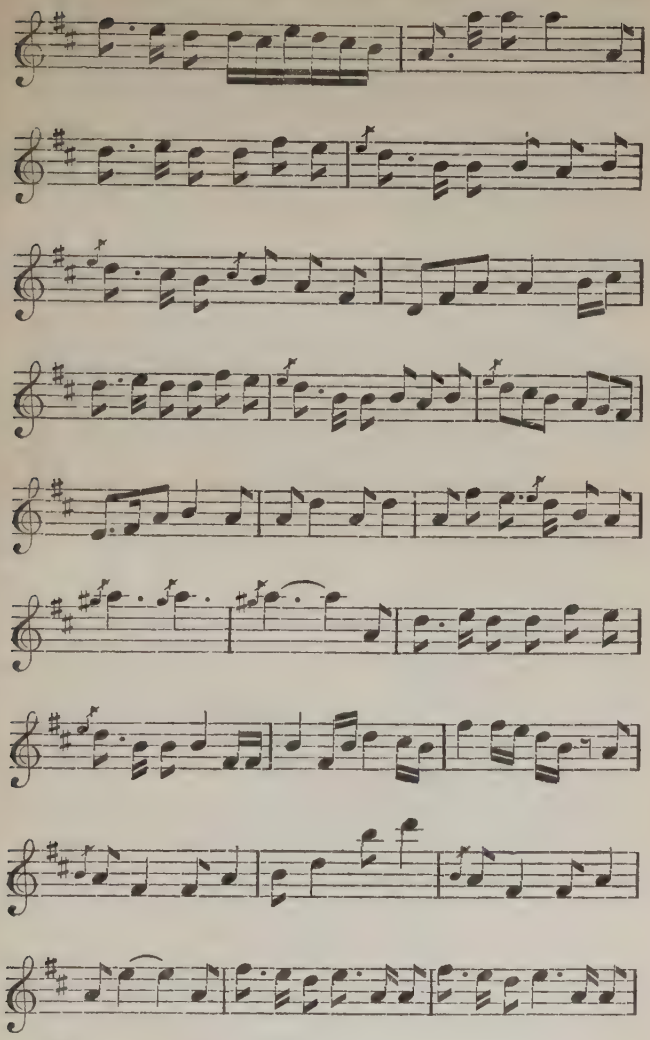
[1] These are the figures given by Gordon, *Earldom of Sutherland*, pp. 246-47. Fraser, in *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., pp. 191-92, says the numbers are too high; but he gives no evidence to the contrary, and between Buchanans, Colquhouns, and townsmen of Dunbarton there must certainly have been a strong force. Fraser is not reliable, and on several occasions suppresses facts discreditable to the family of Colquhoun.

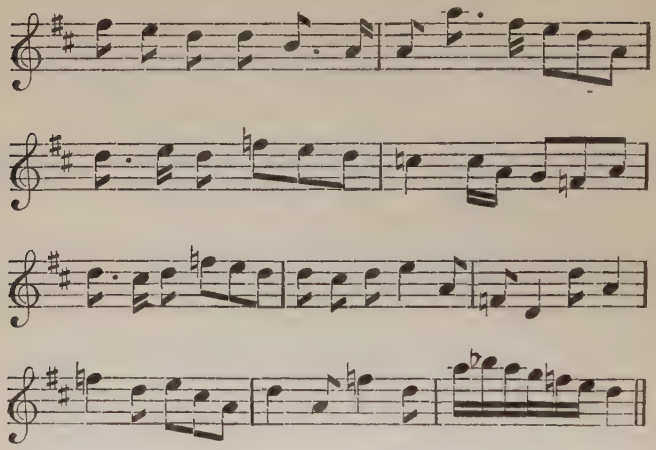
he knew that the King had already delegated his authority to Argyll. It is likely enough, however, that he was not aware of Colquhoun's commission, but only knew that he was raising his men for a counter-raid. In either case it must have seemed to him that his rights were as good as Colquhoun's.

In any case only one course was open to him. He could not hand over his poor faithful guilty rascals to the vengeance of Colquhoun; he could not let another man lead the clan against their foes.

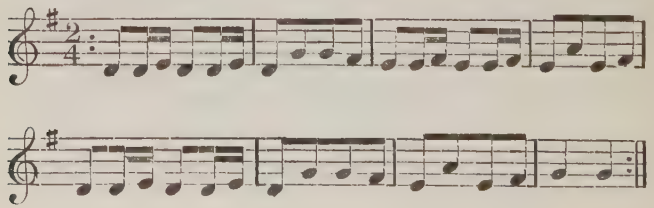
So the banner was up in the Braes of Rannoch, and Alasdair's piper made the echoes ring from Meall Gorm to Killichonan with the fierce gathering call of the clan:





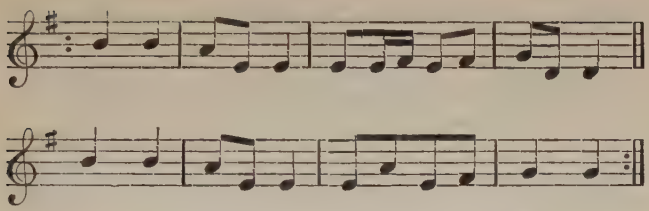


From Rannoch, where Alasdair had been living since he was driven out of Glenstrae, they went south across the hills to meet Ian Dubh and his men in Balquhidder. They had with them some Camerons and Campbells, and some of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, who were always ready for pickings. The pipers would be playing MacGregor's march now. To-day the air is used for the sing-song words of a children's game; it must have sounded very different that day among the snow-capped Perthshire mountains:



On "the 32 merkland west the Water of Erochty"

Loch Lomond



With the Balquhidder men they made up in all some 400, all "boden in feir of weir, with halberts, pole-axes, twa-handit swords, bows and arrows, and other weapons." All the leading men of the clan were there—the chief and his brother, the Tutor's three sons, MacGregor of Ruara, and Robert Abrach, grandson of old Duncan Ladasach. From Balquhidder they crossed the hills once more, perhaps by Glen Arklet, and ferried over Loch Lomond to the Pass of Arrochar, and thence took their way down Loch Long side.[1]

It was a round-about road to Luss, and must have been hard going. For some miles

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 298, suggests that they came from Rannoch direct by Crianlarich, Ardlui, and Tarbert, and down the west side of Loch Lomond. This is pure conjecture. The local tradition, of which I was informed by Mr Archie Campbell, beadle at Arrochar Parish Church, is that they came from Balquhidder and ferried over the loch. This appears much more probable, as they would almost certainly set the muster in Balquhidder rather than further north in the Campbell country. We know from contemporary documents that they came down Loch Long side.

below Arrochar the hills descend almost sheer into the waters of Loch Long, and the highroad and railway of to-day have in places been cut out of the rock. To get from the road to the railway is an ugly scramble, even in summer; and this was in winter, and there was no road. But Alasdair was planning a surprise.

Glen Fruin is a forgotten valley, running almost parallel to the Gareloch, and opening on the green fields about the Castle of Bannachra, a few miles from Rossdhu. To enter from the north you must climb the hills above Garelochhead, descending by a break-neck road into the glen. There you can walk for hours without meeting a soul, and the great Highland bulls, dun and tawny, come down the slopes and roar at you as you pass. The hills shut in the glen on all sides, save where the Auchengaich burn comes tinkling down to the farmstead at Strone.

Alasdair, coming over the hills from the north, reached the glen probably near Auchengaich, and halted to dispose his forces at Strone.

Meantime Colquhoun also had made ready. "At the gates of Rossdhu stood the armed band, without fear, without care, without scar," sang the bard of the MacGregors. Probably he had already started off up Loch Lomond

side to meet the enemy, when he received information that Alasdair was approaching from Loch Long, for tradition tells that he marched across the hills from Luss to Auchengaich. It must have been very difficult to take horse across those tangled hilltops, and if tradition tells true, the laird of Luss acted like a fool, for he marched with open eyes straight into a trap. On the other hand, if he got the word at Luss, and started to meet the MacGregors by Glenfruin, then he may have hoped to reach the heights above Garelochhead before he encountered them.

Alasdair had chosen his ground skilfully. He was in an enemy country, and greatly outnumbered; it was *ower shoon, ower boots* now, and there could be no drawing back. He himself, with the main body, took his stance in the narrow throat of the glen, where the ground was broken and boggy. A smaller band, under Ian Dubh nan Lurach, lay hidden in a hollow near Strone.

In open country, Colquhoun's cavalry could have smashed the enemy to bits, for Highland troops could never stand the shock of horse; but here, floundering in bogs and water-courses and knee-deep in heather, the cavalry was useless. The foot broke, as Lowland foot commonly did before a Highland charge. They tried to retreat down the glen, but Ian Dubh

and his followers sprang from their ambush and cut them off.

In the first brush the leader dropped, struck by an arrow:

Quickly didst thou turn, stripling MacLintock;
Thou hast slain Black John with the Mail-coat, great MacGregor's son.

But that did not avail the Colquhouns. The retreat became a rout, the rout a slaughter. Buchanan of Bucklyvie was killed and several others of his name, six gentlemen of the Colquhouns and many of the common folk, David Fallasdale and Tobias Smollett and others of the burgesses of Dunbarton. Semple of Fulwood was carried off a prisoner. Alexander Colquhoun himself was chased to the gates of Rossdhu, and his horse killed under him. In all some 120 perished; but some of these were prisoners killed after the fight. Tradition says that the chief had given them into the care of one of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, ordering him to keep them safe. Seeing that the MacGregors were winning the field, the guard coolly stabbed them one after the other. When Alasdair returned and asked for them, he replied, holding out his bloody dirk, "Ask that, and God help me!" This ruffian, one Alan Oig MacIntnach of Glencoe, was later called to account by the Privy

Council; but at the moment the MacGregors got the credit of his brutality.[1]

Then they harried the Lennox, and drove home a great booty: 600 cattle, 800 sheep and goats, 240 horses, and the whole plenishing of the lands of Luss. They fired every house and stack. They buried Ian Dhu where he had fallen, and marked his grave with a great stone and returned to the north.[2]

They went first to the house of one of their own people, Gregor Gair. He had been too old to go with them, though he had "hounded out" his three sons to follow their chief. He gave them food, and was after arrested and hanged for resetting Alasdair MacGregor as he came from Glenfruin "with the bloody hand."[3]

There was weeping and crying the coronach

[1] The tradition given by Sir Walter Scott, that the prisoners killed were boys from Dunbarton Grammar School, is shown by Pitcairn to be pure myth. The indictment against the MacGregors (Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 432) credits them with the slaughter of the unarmed prisoners, but the later trial of Alan Oig MacIntnach shows that that individual was responsible for it, and indeed for no less than one-third of the total mortality. He "with his awn hand murdered without pity the number of 40 poor persons who were naked and without armour." Presumably the prisoners would be cavalry taken in the earlier part of the fight. *R.P.C.*, vol. viii., p. 219.

[2] See Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 432; *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i., p. 196 ff.; *Earldom of Sutherland*, p. 246; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., p. 284 ff.

[3] Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 438.

in Stronvar, when Ian Dubh's young wife learned that he would come home no more to her and his three little sons. But if they had known what was to come, they would have grieved less for the young man dead in fair fight than for those who were left alive. It must have been with a heavy heart that Alasdair went north, the fierce exultation natural to his kind striving in his breast with grief for his brother and foreboding for the future. He had been too successful. The government could never pass over this. If Argyll kept his fair promises, then indeed he might find a refuge until the storm blew over. But could he trust Argyll? And if the Earl threw him over, then indeed there was nothing but ruin ahead.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARL OF ARGYLL'S HUNTING

> Fye upon treason, quoth Sir Tristram, for it killeth my heart to hear this tale.
>
> MALORY.

I

IT was the spring of 1603. Far away in her palace in the south, the great Queen of England lay gasping and speechless among the cushions they had spread for her on the floor. Round about her courtiers stood, holding their breath, to watch her die. Outside, under the window, waited a gentleman booted and spurred for the road, with a horse ready saddled. When at last Elizabeth was dead, one of her ladies took the ring she had worn, and gave it through the window to the waiting cavalier. Relays of horses had been appointed for him; for two days he rode north, neither sleeping nor resting, and on the third day reached Edinburgh, and told James the Sixth that he was King of England.

For weeks the King had been waiting for the news; waiting to see whether, even at the last moment, the prize might not be

snatched from his hands. Now he had won the height of his ambition at last. Good-bye to the north; good-bye to Edinburgh, with its bitter winds and hanging haars; good-bye to Presbyterian ministers who rated him from the pulpit, and turbulent nobles who thought their blood as good as his, and lawyers who argued that his consent was not necessary to the making of laws; good-bye to the lawless people who loved their liberties better than their comforts; good-bye to Scotland. King James was bound for London, London his long-looked for goal.

> Of royal cities rose and geraflour,
> Empress of towns, exalt in honour,
> In bewtie beryng the croun imperiall,
> Sweet paradise precelling in pleasour—
> London, thou art the flour of cities all!

So the Scottish poet had sung, and James whole-heartedly echoed his words.

But, even in the heat of his preparations, he found time to deal with the Clan Gregor before he went.

The first step of the Privy Council, when they heard the news of the Field of the Lennox, as it was called, was the common one of issuing summonses against all the culprits, calling to arms the local landlords against them, and denouncing all those who should give them help or shelter. Just two

days before the King left, however, at the last council he held, an Act of a much more remarkable nature was passed.

The government, weary of the misdeeds of the MacGregors, decided to destroy the wicked clan altogether. Henceforth, it was declared, there should be no Clan Gregor. The name MacGregor was proscribed, and to own to it was a crime punishable by death. Innocent persons who bore the name must change it by law; but all those who had taken part in the raid of Glenfruin were denounced rebels and outlaws. Anyone was at liberty to kill a MacGregor. A price was set on the heads of all the clan—he who killed or took one of them was to be rewarded with a grant of all the dead man's possessions; and, if he were himself at the horn for any offence, he was to be pardoned.

Such was to be the fate of the men of the clan — and the term apparently included all boys over fourteen. Later, new Acts were passed dealing with the women; they were to be branded on the face, and transported wherever the government should decide. The children—at first nobody seemed to think of that problem. As far as the government was concerned, the children might fend for themselves. The Highland chiefs, even those who most severely enforced this horrible Act, were

more merciful. They took the children who fell into their hands and kept them, afterwards demanding the expenses of their keep from the government. The exception was Stewart of Ardvoirlich, who is said to have killed every MacGregor he could lay hands on, male or female, young or old. One may naturally suppose that most of the MacGregor women preferred to follow their men to the hills, rather than wait to be branded on the face and trust to the charity of their enemies.

It appears by a letter from the Privy Council to the King, dated May 1603, that the original intention was not to press the matter so hard against the Clan Gregor. Those actually guilty of the raid were to be banished—though where they were to be banished to, and what they were to do when landed penniless and destitute on some foreign shore, is uncertain. The fighting men, however, would at least have been well enough off in this case, for there was always a market for Scottish swords on the Continent. The offer was made to the chief, who was in hiding somewhere, and was accepted by him. He sent half a dozen of his young men as pledges that he would fulfil his part of the bargain. The Council then wrote to the King, to request that a ship might be sent to Edinburgh to remove the exiles, "seeing all these wha are to depart,

in whilk number the laird himself is ane, are to be in readiness here, ready to embark again Whitsuntide, being unable of themselves to defray their charges, furnish themselves of victual, or pay their fraught."

The ship was not sent. Perhaps the King was unwilling to "pay the fraught" out of his own pocket; perhaps some influence, inimical to the Clan Gregor, made itself felt at court or Council. At any rate it was determined to take the more savage alternative. Instead of banishment, extermination became the policy of the government.[1]

II

So began the hunting of the Clan Gregor.

At first there were many, as in the past, who were willing to help and shelter them. The Campbells of Ardkinlas and Strachur had received the plunder brought from Glenfruin. Campbell of Dragach, and the Captain of Carrick, and Aulay MacAulay sheltered them in their houses, and supplied them with food and other necessaries. But it soon became clear that the new Act was very different from the Letters of Fire and Sword that had been issued in the past.

The government, through their agents in the Highlands, began to put the law into

[1] *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., pp. 303, 383.

force with a thoroughness and vindictiveness never known before. Ian Dubh's three little sons were seized and placed in secure hands, mostly with their mother's kindred, who were to be responsible for their safe keeping to the government. Those who had sheltered Alasdair were prosecuted; Aulay MacAulay was actually brought to trial, and only escaped because the Duke of Lennox interfered on his behalf, won his pardon from the King, and carried him off to England in his tail. The Campbell gentlemen were also threatened with punishment, but nothing came of it. No doubt their chief intervened and promised that they would not offend again.[1]

For it was seen now—and this was the worst of all for the Clan Gregor—that the strong arm of Argyll, which had hitherto sheltered them, was withdrawn.

The Earl had no further use for Glenstrae. He had served his turn, and to protect him now would only be dangerous to his patron. Earl Archibald remembered that he had himself a crow to pick with Alasdair; he remembered how the MacGregor chief had striven against his influence and refused to fulfil his behests. Let him redd his own ravelled clue.

[1] Pitcairn, vol. ii., pp. 414-15; *Chiefs of Colquhoun*, vol. i. p. 206.

Waterfall in Glen Falloch

Loch Fyne, looking towards Ardkinlas

Hitherto, when Letters of Fire and Sword had been issued against the MacGregors, their neighbours had had no motive to act on them, unless they had already some private enmity with the clan. But now, the price set on their heads, and the pardon promised to their killers, were great inducements. There were men ready to make a trade of hunting outlawed MacGregors, for the sake of the blood-money.

Many and wild are the legends that have come down to us of the days of that hunting. Black Duncan of Glenorchy kept a pack of blood-hounds to track the fugitives. Once they chased a MacGregor into Glenfalloch. Seeing that they were gaining on him, and that he could not hope to throw the blood-hound off his trail, he concealed himself beneath a fall of water and, as the dog came sniffing along the brink, he shot it through the veil of spray and then got safely off. Another tale relates how a man in Glenlyon met a fleeing MacGregor, unarmed and exhausted. He helped the fellow to escape, then went to meet the hound that was tracking him, and killed it with a kick on the head. When the Campbells came up and demanded to know who had slain their dog, he replied with true Highland cunning and many oaths, that *he* had never *laid a hand* on it.

A certain man had set a tryst with three

MacGregors at a little change-house in the hills, minding to betray them. The outlaws arrived first, and he tried to hold them in talk, until the band of armed men whom he was expecting could reach the place. But the woman who kept the inn warned them that there was treason planning. It was a snowy winter night. They did not kill him, but they forced him to strip, and made him carry the deer that they had killed on their way. When they reached a place of safety in the mountains, they let him go, to struggle back more dead than alive to his men.

More than once the promised pardon was won. A young blackguard named Archibald Dalzell, younger son of Dalzell of that Ilk, had been long in hiding and at the horn for various crimes of violence, including the rape of a young woman. He now sallied out, killed two MacGregors, and presented himself in triumph before the Privy Council with their heads, eagerly protesting that he desired nothing better than to carry on the good work. Colquhoun of Camstrodden won a pardon in a similar way, by capturing two MacGregors, one of whom, however, escaped the gallows by committing suicide in prison — he "barbarously stickit himself," as the Privy Council indignantly remarked.

The Clan Gregor did not submit tamely to

their fate. They met here and there in strong bands of sixty or seventy, in wild waste places. They harried Glenfalloch from end to end, and burnt Black Duncan's tower of Achallader for him. Once, it is told, one of those wretches who had made a trade of the hunting was proceeding to the town, with the heads of several dead MacGregors in a bag on his saddle-bow, to claim the blood-money. It was a day of falling mist and rain, and he had to ride along the shore of a lonely loch. No living soul was in sight, and it seemed to the guilty mind of the murderer that the heads of the dead began to whisper and chuckle among themselves. With heartfelt joy he at last perceived the figure of a man standing solitary by the side of the track, and eagerly invited the stranger to be his travelling companion.

"What have you got there?" said his new acquaintance, as they went along.

"It is the heads of some outlawed MacGregors," said the other, "but they are more talkative than I like"; and he related the whole of his story. The stranger stood thunderstruck: then placed a whistle to his lips and blew. At once three or four men sprang up among the heather.

"Take him," said their leader. He was a chief among the MacGregors. They seized

the terrified creature who had betrayed himself, and hanged him on the nearest tree.

If this legend has a foundation of truth, it may have been Alasdair MacGregor himself who wrought this summary vengeance on the murderer of his kinsmen.[1]

It was at the time of this hunting that the song, *MacGregor of Ruara*, was written. Ruara himself either fell at Glenfruin or suffered death for his share in the raid—it is uncertain which. The song, which begins with a lament for the dead, goes on to a note of warning to the living:

Now a rede I would rede thee, and thereon well think thou:
When thou goest to the hostel, but a single cup drink thou.
Stand and drink. Be thou ware of the men that look on:
Be the cup deep or shallow, drink it down, and be gone.

Make winter thy autumn, the wolf-days thy summer:
Thy bed be the bare rock, and light be thy slumber.
For though scarce be the squirrel, there's a way got to find her,
And though proud be the falcon, there are deft hands can bind her.

How lively comes the picture to the mind of the Highland outlaw, lurking in the remote corries of the hills, stealing down now and

[1] Argyll, *Adventures in Legend*, p. 206 ff.; Stewart, *Highland Parish*, p. 32 f.; *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 38 ff.; Scott, *Account of Clan MacGregor*; *R.P.C.*, vol. vi., pp. 139, 320, 423, 475, 483, 862; vol. vii., p. 11.

then to Killin or Fortingall, on one of those days when fair-time made truce to all feuds; venturing into the drinking-shop, but not daring to sit, the cup in one hand, the other on his dirk, his eyes ranging among the crowd for signs of treachery or hate in the faces of the men who stared and whispered.

Changed were the times since Alasdair had kept open house to his clansmen at Stronmelochan and Rannoch:

Open was thy hand to thy friends;
Ever the ready smile to greet clansman or chieftain;
None ever left thy threshold with a heavy heart.
Strangers came from afar, and the harpers of Ireland sang,
To the tunes of old days, the praise of thy deeds in war.
They drained the wine-cup, the pipes' merry music rang—
Alas, are those bright days gone for ever? . . .

Luckless was thy foray, son of Red Gregor!

III

Meanwhile prisoner after prisoner was brought in to Edinburgh, hurried through a hasty trial, and hanged. The first victims, four in number, were sentenced to death on 18th April 1603 and executed on the boroughmuir. Three more were hanged on the Castlehill on 20th May. On 5th July two others suffered, of whom one was Ian Dubh's gillie; a week later another, and two more in August.

These were formal executions in the capital; they were tried and convicted for having been present at Glenfruin. But how many were hunted down in the Highlands, and how many women and children perished of cold and hunger during the winter of 1603-4, merely because they bore the name of MacGregor, can only be guessed.

Every death on the gallows, every fresh misfortune that befell his unhappy people, came home to the heart of the hunted chief. He had few now to whom he might look for help. Aulay MacAulay was in England. The Murrays were in the black books of the government for looking friendly on him. There remained Ardkinlas; and at last a message reached him from that quarter, inviting him to the old house on the banks of Loch Fyne.

There must have been some old tie of comradeship between these two men, besides the bond of kinship; for Alasdair called him "the man I did maist trust into." Why else should the MacGregor have so trusted the feeble and half-hearted Campbell chieftain, the one-time tool of Black Duncan, the man who with murder in his heart had lacked the courage to strike? It was some old comradeship, or else mere blind folly, that led Alasdair to the house on Loch Fyne. Ardkinlas had sold him.

The poor wretch was greatly tempted. He went in deadly fear of Argyll, and here was a way of reconciling himself with the Earl, and even winning his favour. Ardkinlas must have felt himself very helpless; he lived in Argyll's own country, his castle only separated by a league or two of salt water from Inveraray. Argyll was his overlord as well as his chief, and had, as we have seen, kept him out of his possessions for some time. He was not the man to risk giving further offence now, for a mere scruple of honour, and word had reached him that Argyll wanted the MacGregor taken. Then no doubt his wife took the same side. *He that marries a widow will have a deid man's head aft thrown in his dish.* The widow of Sir Humphry Colquhoun must have been eager to see the injuries of his clan avenged.

Alasdair came unsuspecting, probably alone. Ardkinlas had armed men waiting, and they took him.

The house of Ardkinlas stands near the head of Loch Fyne. The water lies shallow along the shores there, and when tide is out it glimmers like a pigeon's plumage, bronze and blue and lilac and green and orange, all shifting and rippling one into the other. The hills close in behind, leaving barely room for the house and its policies. The water of Kinlas

comes down its narrow glen, fast and fierce, hidden in a deep ravine; to one side Ben Arthur and Ben Ime, with their strange-shaped rocks that look as if they have been carved by the hands of man; to the other Hell's Glen, and the stretch of tangled moory tops called "The Duke of Argyll's Bowling-green." To get to Inveraray by land, you must ride round the head of the Loch, where there are long stretches of shingle, and the fishing gulls and black and white oyster-catchers line the shore; and there at the head opens Glenfyne, straight and shadowy in those winter days when the sun hardly got above the western hills, running up into the wild northern mountains, with one black secret corrie after another seaming its sides.

There could be no better place for a rescue, if the MacGregors should get wind of their chief's capture. It was too risky to send the prisoner round that way. But, by water, it was only a few miles across the Loch to where Inveraray stood in the curve of its bay: the little town peering at itself in the shining wave of Loch Shira; MacCailein's great castle standing proudly above it; and two-pointed Dunniquaich, with the watch-tower on its brow, guarding all.

So they put Alasdair in a boat, with his hands tied, and five men to guard him, and

set off over the sea to deliver him to Argyll. He was a strong, active man, and he was desperate. Somehow he got his hands loose, struck down the fellow beside him, and leapt overboard. Swimming and diving, he reached the shore, and in an hour was safe again among the kindly hills.[1]

This happened on the 2nd of October 1603. Winter was coming. By that time often the snow is already lying on the heights of Cruach Ardran and Ben More. Weeks of rain and snow would soon render the mountain moors impassable. What was to become of his homeless people, "puir bairns and infants, and puir women perishing for hunger, when they are harried of their gear," as he asked himself?

Things were growing steadily worse. Robert Campbell, one of Black Duncan's younger sons, gathered a great force and pursued the MacGregors into their own country of

[1] *Birrell's Diary*, Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 434. Balfour, *Annals*, vol. i., p. 415. The MS. history quoted by Pitcairn declares that Ardkinlas's house stood on an island. As a matter of fact it stands on a sort of triangular peninsula formed by the waters of the Kinlas and of Loch Fyne. I would suggest that the writers had not seen the place, but only heard an account of the episode, and that, hearing that Ardkinlas sent his prisoner in a boat, they concluded that his house, like many Highland castles, stood on an island. Alasdair himself merely says that he was trapped by Ardkinlas, "but God did relieve me unto liberty, maist narrowly."

Rannoch, and fought a desperate fight there, in which seven Campbell gentlemen were killed ; but the outlaws had in the end the worst of it.[1]

As the winter deepened, and the days grew shorter and colder, messages reached Alasdair from the Earl of Argyll. Earl Archibald swore he knew nothing of the trap laid by Ardkinlas—it was that chieftain's own plan, he said. He meant Alasdair nothing but good. He would make his peace with the King, and win him pardon, if he would but come in and give himself up quietly. "He wad mak my peace, and safe my life and lands," says Alasdair, "only to punish certain faltours of my kin, and my innocent friends to renounce their surname and live peaceably."

The Earl spent time and trouble on the affair. A pathetic letter, probably concocted by himself and his friends, relates how he was not only "driven to intolerable toil and pain in his awn person, but also has bestowit huge and great sums of money, as weel in levying of men as in particular rewards to some persons to effectuate this turn." At last, seeing that Alasdair was wavering, the Earl added a likelier bait. He promised to send him safely over the Border into England, where he might

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, p. 39 ; *Earldom of Sutherland*, p. 247.

make his way to London, and beg his own pardon of the King.[1]

It was tempting. Once before he had thrown himself on the King's mercy, and obtained it. He was, after all, the King's householdman. His good friend Aulay MacAulay was in London, and would help him. It seemed the only chance to save his people. He consented to a personal interview. They met, and Argyll, in the presence of a mutual friend, pledged his word to send the MacGregor safely to England, and gave him a written promise to that effect.[2]

"The promise," said Alasdair later, "gif they be honestly keepit, I let God be the judge."

So one dark midwinter evening the Clan Gregor assembled in some lonely glen to bid their chief good-bye.

Luckless was thy foray, Son of Red Gregor!
Thou that was my chiefest joy, thou hast brought us
sorrow enough to-night . . .

Deep was our grief, yestreen at the gloaming,
The chief of our clan, the first man of our race, was the cause.
Dark was the glen, and long the farewell.

---

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vii., p. 749.

[2] Alasdair says he had a written promise, and probably he had. If he had merely a verbal guarantee and no other evidence, it is unlikely that the government would have gone to the trouble and expense they did, merely in order to enable Argyll technically to fulfil his promise.

God bring our lost hope back to us!
Had I but gone with him, then I could bear it:
Whatever befell, though in a Saxon prison,
I'd be happy beside my chief.

Then Alasdair, along with Ian Dubh MacEwin and several other gentlemen of the clan, surrendered himself, and was brought by the Earl to Edinburgh.

The "Earl of Guile and Lord Forlorn" fulfilled his engagements to the letter. "He keepit ane Hielandman's promise," Robert Birrell, a burgess of Edinburgh, wrote in his diary. Alasdair was sent, convoyed by some of his men, to Berwick; they saw him safe across the Border into England. But he had no sooner set foot there than he was met and seized by a band of the town guard of Edinburgh, who took him prisoner again and carried him back to the capital.

Thus did Earl Archibald keep his promise and have his revenge too. He did not even find himself out of pocket over the affair. The government paid the expenses. There still exists an order, signed by the Chancellor, Montrose, and the councillors, authorising the payment of twenty crowns to one John Murray, "the price of ane broun naig, which is deid in his Majesty's service, in carrying of MacGregor at our command to Berwick and back here." If we knew in what circumstances the brown

nag met its premature end, it would tell us much. Did it, perhaps, fall under him in an attempt to outride his pursuers? Was it shot down in some desperate struggle, when he knew himself again betrayed?[1]

IV

It was on the 4th of January 1604, that Alasdair had given himself up. On the 18th of that month he was brought back from Berwick to Edinburgh, and next day he was brought up for trial, four of his followers with him.

On the night of his return he was visited in prison by some gentlemen—lawyers. One of them, with pens and paper, was Mr James Primrose, clerk of the Council. They asked him for a statement, or he offered it. This preliminary statement is still taken of prisoners before trial in Scotland, but it is now taken in the presence of the prisoner's counsel. Then there was no such safeguard; and it is probably that at the present day the judge would have disallowed Alasdair's statement as evidence, in consideration of the circumstances in which it was made.

They seemed to him, no doubt, friendly—it was their business to get men to talk. At

[1] Hist. MSS. Co., Laing MSS., vol. i., p. 538.

least they listened, and encouraged him to ease the weight on his heart by speech. All that must have been in his mind as they brought him back to Edinburgh, and he saw again field and tower and tree that he had passed so lately, with his heart full of hope—all came pouring out now, broken and confused: the story, one can see in spite of the attempts the lawyers to put it into legal phraseology, of a man shaken by passion and despair. "Confession of Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae," they headed it. It was not a confession, but an accusation:

> I've lived a life of sturt and strife,
> I die by treachery.
> It burns my heart I must depart
> And not avenged be.

"I, Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae, confess here before God that I have been persuadit, movit, and enticit, as I am now presently accusit and troublit for; als, gif I had usit counsel or command of the man that has enticit me, I wad have done and committit sindry high murders mair. For truly, sin I was first his Majesty's man, I never could be at ane ease, by my lord of Argyll's falseheid and inventions; for he causit MacLean and Glen Chamroun (Clan Cameron) to commit hership and slaughter in my rowme of Rannoch, the whilk causit my puir men thereafter to beg and steal. Alsua,

thereafter, he movit my brother and some of my friends to commit baith hership and slaughter upon the laird of Luss.

"Alsua, he persuadit myself, with message, to weir agains the laird of Buchanan, whilk I did refuse; for the whilk I was continually boastit that he would be my unfriend: and when I did refuse his desire in that point, then he enticit me with other messengers, as by the laird of MacNachtan and others of my friends, to weir and trouble the laird of Luss; which I behovit to do for his false boutgaits.

"Then, when he saw I was at ane strait, he causit me to trow he was my guid friend; but I did perceive he was slow therein. Then I made my moyan to please his Majesty and Lords of Council, baith of service and obedience, to punish faltours and to safe innocent men; and when Argyll was made foreseen thereof, he enticit me to stay and start fra thae conditions, causing me to understand that I was deceivit; but with fair words, to put me in ane snare, that he might get the lands of Kintyre in feyell fra his Majesty, began to put at me and my kin.

"The whilk Argyll inventit, maist shamefully, and persuadit the laird of Ardkinlas to deceive me, wha was the man I did maist trust into; but God did relieve me in the meantime unto liberty, maist narrowly. Nevertheless

Argyll made the open bruit, that Ardkinlas did all that falseheid by (*i.e.* without) his knowledge. Whilk he did entice me, with oft and sindry messages, that he wad mak my peace and safe my life and lands, only to punish certain faltours of my kin, and my innocent friends to renounce their surname and live peaceably. Upon the whilk conditions, he was sworn by an aith to his friends, and they sworn to me; and als, I have his warrant and handwrit thereupon: the whilk promise, gif they be honestly keepit, I let God be judge! And at our meeting, in our awn chalmer, he was sworn to me, in witness of his awn friend.

"Attour I confess, before God, that he did all his crafty diligence to entice me to slay and destroy the laird Ardincaple, MacAulay, for ony gains, kindness or friendship he might do or give me. The whilk I did refuse, in respect of my faithful promise made to MacAulay of-before. Alsua, he did all the diligence he could, to move me to slay the laird of Ardkinlas, in like manner: bot I never grantit thereto; through the whilk he did envy me grettumly.

"And now, seeing God and man sees it is greediness of warldly gear causes him to put at me and my kin, and not the weal of the realm, nor to pacify the samyn, nor to his Majesty's honour, bot to put down innocent

men, to cause puir bairns and infants beg, and puir women to perish for hunger, when they are harried of their gear; the whilk, I pray God that these faults light not upon his Majesty hereafter, nor upon his succession. Wherefore, I wad beseek God, that his Majesty knew the verity, that at this hour I wad be content to tak banishment, with all my kin that was at the laird of Luss's slaughter, and all others of them that ony fault can be laid to their charge; and his Majesty, of his mercy, to let puir innocent men and young bairns pass to liberty, and learn to live as innocent men.

"The whilk I wad fulfil, bot ony kind of fail; whilk wad be mair to the will of God and his Majesty's honour, nor the greedy cruel form that is devisit, only for love of gear, having neither respect to God nor honesty."[1]

V

The next morning Glenstrae was brought up for trial. The trial was a mere mockery. On the jury sat men who would never have been allowed to pass in any court where justice was respected. Thomas Fallasdale, burgess of Dunbarton, sat there; his kinsmen, David,

[1] Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 434. Original in the General Register House, Edinburgh.

Thomas, and James Fallasdale, had been killed at Glenfruin. The Captain of Dunbarton was another of the jurors; and Colin Campbell, Fiar of Glenorchy, Black Duncan's eldest son; and Menzies of that Ilk, whose 32-merkland of Rannoch Alasdair had so long held by the strong hand, against his will. To the prisoner it must have seemed that they had chosen all his bitterest foes to sit in judgment on him, and if he had any hopes left, built on his statement of last night, he must have lost them now.

The "Confession" was produced in court by the prosecution, as evidence of the prisoner's guilt. It contained his own explicit statement that he had led the expedition against Colquhoun. As for the accusations against Argyll, nobody cared a straw for them. MacCailein More was too great a man to be shaken by such tales as these.

The jury without a dissentient voice found the panel guilty; and the "Justice-depute finding the saids crimes to be treasonable," the Doomster, as was the custom in Scottish law-courts, stood forth, approached each prisoner in turn, and touched them, in token that their heads were now his; and then he pronounced the sentence: "That the saids persons be tane to the Mercat-Cross of Edinburgh, and there to be hangit on ane gibbet

while they be deid; and thereafter their heids, legs, arms, and remanent parts of their bodies to be quarterit and put upon public places, and their hale lands, heritages, annual-rents, taks, steadings, rowmes, possessions, corns, cattle, guids, gear, and sums of money pertaining to them, to be forfaultit, escheat, and inbrought to our sovereign lord's use, as convict of the saids treasonable crimes."

Next day the sentence was carried out. With the chief were the four of his clan who had stood trial with him, and also five or six others, who had been handed over as hostages for the due fulfilment of the scheme of banishment last year. These last were hanged without any trial, though "they were young men, and reputed honest for their own parts," as Calderwood remarks.

The good people of Edinburgh turned out as usual for the entertainment which in those days took the place of the theatre and the picture-house. The common folk crowded the High Street, while the gentry looked down from their windows in the tall "lands" above. One young lad fell in a fit as he watched: he was paralysed on one side when they raised him, and cried out that "the Hielandmen had shot him with ane arrow." He died in a few days—it was a dear pleasuring for James Hope.

Glenstrae, with the grim courtesy of those

days, was hanged his own height above the rest, in token of his rank.[1]

If a' the blood shed at thy Tron,
Embro', Embro',
If a' the blood shed at thy Tron
Were shed intil a river,
It wad ca' the mills o' Bonnington,
Embro', Embro',
It wad ca' the mills o' Bonnington
For ever and for ever.

If a' the hearts that's brak in thee,
Embro', Embro',
If a' the hearts that's brak in thee
Were heaped intil a howe,
There wad be neither earth nor sea,
Embro', Embro',
There wad be neither earth nor sea,
But yon red hill, and thou.

[1] Pitcairn, vol. ii., p. 432 f.; Calderwood, vol. vi., p. 247; Balfour, *Annals*, vol. i., p. 415.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NAMELESS CLAN

Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt!
If they rob us of name, and pursue us with beagles,—
Give their roofs to the flame, and their flesh to the eagles.

SCOTT.

THE head of Alasdair MacGregor, sent by the government to Dunbarton, was fixed there above the town tolbooth; and the citizens, when they lamented the dark day of Glenfruin, might look up and see it as they passed, and think that at least their enemy had paid.

Three years later the King, as a reward to the Earl of Argyll for his loyal services against the Clan Gregor, granted him the lands of Kintyre "in feyell."[1]

Meantime the hunting of the clan went on unchecked. Robert Campbell, Glenorchy's son, went out again with a strong force, and

[1] *R.P.C.*, vol. vii., p. 749.

drove them into the skirts of Ben Buie. There was a great fight, in which most of the leading men of the MacGregors who still remained were killed, and after that the outlaws could no longer hold together in great companies; only bands of ten or twelve at most haunted in the hills.

It was a profitable business, the hunting of the Clan Gregor. In 1611 the Privy Council was still paying money down for heads presented before them. In 1613 Campbell of Lawers had on his hands no less than seventy MacGregor boys under fourteen, whose fathers had been killed; he demanded an exorbitant sum for his expenses, and he and Glenorchy became involved in a vicious quarrel over the spoils. The Earl of Argyll made so much money out of it that the King became jealous and demanded a share, and he was obliged to give his Majesty £22, 10s. on every £100 which he received.[1]

As the years passed the persecution gradually became less bitter. The surviving members of the clan found friendship and shelter with kindly neighbours, changed their names, and settled down to "learn to live as innocent men." Some were still too proud to accept

[1] *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 38-42, 48-51; *History of Clan Gregor*, vol. i., pp. 383, 385, 393, etc.; *R.P.C.*, vols. viii. and ix.

peace when the price was the surrender of their birthright, and clung to their wild life in the hills. Among these was the Gillie Roy, or Red Lad, who for many years was the terror of the Highlands, was such a clever thief that he is reputed to have gone to Paris and picked the pocket of Cardinal Richelieu and has a ballad to himself under the title of *Gilderoy*.

Maybe, if Alasdair MacGregor could have seen the future that last night in Edinburgh, it would have given him comfort to know that his enemy did not long enjoy the fruits of his treachery. Earl Archibald fled abroad in 1618. He lived another twenty years, but it was in exile, stripped of his lands and titles, a renegade, apostate, and attainted traitor. His son and his grandson died on the scaffold.

Black Duncan lived till 1631 and died in his bed, full of years and honours.

It was not until well on in the eighteenth century that the iniquitous law proscribing the name of MacGregor was at length repealed; and then, all over Scotland, respectable farmers and tradesmen, doctors and lawyers, astounded their neighbours by flinging off the titles of Drummond, Murray, or Campbell which they had borne, and, resuming the name they had cherished in their hearts, announced themselves

MacGregors. I was once wandering over the hills of Strathfillan, and came upon a little graveyard almost lost among long tangled grass, without even a path leading to it to show it was remembered. Among the stones was one that bore no name, but only the initials, J.M., M.C. It was sculptured with the pine branch and the crown, and inscribed with the motto of Clan Gregor: "E'en do and spare nocht." Some old MacGregor lay there. The law denied him the right to his own name, and he would not lie there under a false one; so he had put the badge and the savage war-cry of his race.

How can we account for the bitter hostility that pursued the Clan Gregor with such repeated and cruel proscriptions? They were not, as I hope I have shown, worse than their neighbours. But they were friendless. The Scottish Government was exasperated beyond bearing by the lawlessness of the people they had to rule. They had not the power to enforce justice upon the great feudal barons or the chiefs of powerful clans, who defied them; but the Clan Gregor had no great landlord to protect them, and so they became the scapegoat for all Scotland. The rage and irritation of the government, which they were often forced to swallow, found its vent here, and they punished the Clan Gregor more

severely because they could not touch other and greater malefactors.

It is long past and done with now. The old injustice, never righted, is forgotten. Nothing remains of it but the words of a poet, remembered because of their own beauty; a few ancient pipe-tunes, which momentarily stir the blood of those who know nothing of the passions that gave them birth; and a paper among the dusty records, which occasionally some student reads, and feels on a sudden a thrill and pang at the heart, like one who, thrusting his hand among a heap of withered leaves, feels warmth and the hurried throbbing of a living heart.

The Highlands are empty now. The hills are blasted and the clear waters fouled, that strangers may make money and Cockney housewives have aluminium pans to cook their dinners. The men have been driven out to make a solitude for the wild deer. Tourists pass occasionally through the silent glens, where once little houses clustered, and gape over the fables of the Rev. T. Ratcliffe Barnett, while the more cultured murmur of Celtic Gloom. They are making a road through Glencoe, so that motorists may race through it at sixty miles an hour; and an English soap-boiler can buy in London the title to call himself Lord of the Western Isles.

There are no ghosts in the Highlands now, and the wild heart whose agony ended at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh that winter day in 1604, has been still for three hundred years, cold in the quiet grave.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland," vols. i. to lx. (here quoted as R.P.C.).

"The Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission": the Breadalbane Papers, the Argyll Papers, and the Laing Manuscripts.

"The New Statistical Account of Scotland," 1841, Perth and Argyll.

"The Black Book of Taymouth," edited by Cosmo Innes for the Bannatyne Club.

"The Miscellany of the Spalding Club."

"Archæologia Scotica," vol. iv. (containing Gregory's "Historical Account of the Clan Gregor").

"Highland Papers," vol. i., published by the Scottish History Society.

"The Red and White Book of Menzies," by C. P. Menzies.

"The Lairds of Glenlyon," by D. Campbell.

"The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor."

"The Chiefs of Colquhoun," by Sir William Fraser.

"The History of Clan Gregor," by A. G. M. MacGregor.

"A Highland Parish (Glenlyon and Rannoch)," by Alexander Stewart.

"History of the Earldom of Sutherland," by Sir Robert Gordon.

"History of the Church of Scotland," by Calderwood.

"Annals," by Sir James Balfour.

"Scottish Criminal Trials," by Pitcairn.

"Clan Campbell Collection," by Sir Duncan Campbell of Barcaldine.

"History of the Western Isles," by Gregory.

"Description of the Western Islands, 1696," by Martin.

"Tour in Scotland, 1778," by Pennant.

"The Clan MacGregor," by Sir Walter Scott.

"Introduction to A Legend of Montrose," by Sir Walter Scott.

"The Book of the Dean of Lismore," edited by MacLauchlin and Skene.

"A Book of Scottish Pasquils," by Maidment.

"The Witch Cult in Western Europe," by M. A. Murray.

"Adventures in Legend," by the Marquis of Lorne.

"Domestic Annals of Scotland," by Chambers.

INDEX

Anne of Denmark, Queen of Scotland, 65, 86, 98
Ardkinlas. *See* Campbell
Argyll, Archibald Campbell, 6th Earl of, 24-7, 57-9, 74, 91
Argyll, Archibald Campbell, 7th Earl of (Archibald the Grim), 57, 69, 72-6, 95-9, 100-2, 110-12, 121 ff., 131 ff., 142 ff., 152, 160, 166, 173-8, 181-8-9
Atholl, Earl of, 18, 39, 69, 79, 129

Buchanan, Clan, 70, 105-6, 142-7, 150-8, 181

Campbell. *See* Argyll
Campbell, Annas, of Glenorchy, 82, 145 ; Archibald, of Lochnell, 75-7, 82-7-8, 100 ; Sir Colin (Grey Colin), of Glenorchy, 30-4, 37-9, 41-6, 58 ; Colin, Fiar of Glenorchy, 184 ; Duncan, Captain of Carrick, 132, 165 ; Sir Duncan (Black Duncan with the Cowl), of Glenorchy, 58 ff., 63-9, 70-5, 78, 80, 87, 94-5, 101, 110, 124-9, 135-8, 167-9, 189 ; Helen, of Glenorchy, 26, 34 ; Sir James, of Ardkinlas, 74-8, 81 ; John, of Ardkinlas, 81 ff., 94-5-8, 100, 112, 131-2, 148, 165, 173-5, 181-2 ; Sir John, of Calder, 56-7, 72-5-8, 80 ff., 93-6, 105 ; John Oig, of Lochnell, 96-7, 89, 101 ; Margaret, wife of John Oig, 96-8 ; Marion, of Glenlyon, 42-4 ; Neil, of Lochgoilhead, 132, 147 ; Robert, of Glenorchy, 175-6, 187
Colquhoun of Luss, 87, 106, 142-4-6-9, 150-2, 157-9, 181

Drummond, Clan, 18, 62-4-6, 70, 80, 105, 115
Dunbarton, Captain and Town of, 143-9, 151-8, 184

Fallasdale, Family of, 149, 158, 183-4

Glenorchy. *See* Campbell
Glenstrae. *See* MacGregor

Hamilton, Jean (Lady Colquhoun, later Mrs Campbell of Ardkinlas), 144-8-9, 173
Huntly, George Gordon, Earl of, 66-9, 85-7, 91-3-9, 100-1

James VI., King of Scots, 60, 65, 85, 90-1, 107-8, 140, 150, 161-3

Letters of Fire and Sword, 16-7, 39, 69, 105-6

MacAulay, Aulay, of Ardincaple, 105-6, 112, 132-3, 146, 165-6, 172, 182
MacDonald, Clan, 18, 37, 54, 158-9
MacEllar, Gillipatrick, 89, 93, 97, 101
MacFarlane of the Arrochar, 109, 144-5
MacGregor, Alasdair Roy MacGregor, of Glenstrae (1587-1604), 42-5; his boyhood, 48; first exploit, 62; refused infeftment, 63; takes the Drummond murder on himself, 67-8, 71-9, 83, 103-4-5, 110-2; goes to court, 113, 116-8, 120-1; relations with Argyll, 123-6, 133-4-7, 140-2, 146-7, 152, 160-6-7, 176 ff., 181; pledge to the Government, 124 ff.; imprisoned, 127, 134-8; raids on the Lennox, 146, 151-2 ff.; capture and escape, 173-5; his deposition, 180 ff.; execution, 185-6
MacGregor, Alasdair MacIan, of Glenstrae, 26-9; Alasdair Galt MacGregor, 47, 57, 69, 118; Duncan of the Glen, 47, 56-7, 69, 118; Duncan MacEwin, 48, 146-8, 155; Duncan Ladasach, 26 ff., 31-3, 46, 58; Ewin MacAlasdair, Tutor of Glenstrae, 39, 46-7, 55 ff., 62-9, 72-7; Gregor Roy MacAlasdair of Glenstrae, 30, 35 ff., 41-4; Gregor MacEwin, 48, 155; Gregor (son of Duncan Ladasach), 31-2; Ian Dubh MacGregor of Glenstrae, 48, 69, 177-8, 120-4, 146-7, 154-5-7-9, 166; Ian Dubh MacEwin, 48, 118, 120, 146, 155, 178; Sir James, Dean of Lismore, 25, 41; John, of Glenstrae, 26; John Galt, 117, 138; Patrick Dubh, 46, 58, 65
MacGregor, Clan, 7-13, 21 ff., 52, 118-9, 163 ff., 189, 190
Maclean, Clan, 5, 120-2
Maitland of Thirlestane, Lord Chancellor, 75, 85 ff., 91-2-8, 101, 107
Mary, Queen of Scots, 38, 40, 150
Menzies of that Ilk, 18, 28, 37-8, 110, 129
Moray, Earl of (The Bonnie Earl), 74-5, 85 ff., 90-1
Murray of Tullibardine, 18, 124-5-6-8

Smollett, Tobias, 142, 158
Stewart of Ardvoirlich, 66, 104-5, 164

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY OLIVER AND BOYD, EDINBURGH